



House Public Utilities Committee  
SB 117 Testimony

Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA)  
Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO)  
Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA)  
May 30, 2007

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, committee members. My name is Jennifer Economus and I represent the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA). With me today are Barbara Shaner from the Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) and Tom Ash from the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA). This testimony is presented jointly from our three organizations.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about Substitute SB 117. We represent the public school district boards of education, superintendents and school business officials from districts around Ohio.

We are concerned about the possible implications for school districts if SB 117 passes in its current form. While some changes were made in the substitute version of the bill as a result of our input in the Senate, we believe those changes do not go far enough.

On behalf of our members, we have three major concerns with the bill:

1. The bill prohibits municipalities from requiring that Video Service Providers (VSPs) provide Institutional Networks (I-Nets) obligations once existing agreements expire or January 1, 2012, whichever comes first. School districts are often the beneficiaries of this service. Under SB 117, we will no longer have assurances that access to this type of network will be available in the future. It is also unclear what will happen to existing equipment once the local agreement expires.
2. School districts would no longer be assured of certain in-kind services now provided through existing agreements such as free internet and cable access once existing agreements with local communities expire. Nothing of value can be required of the VSPs so these services may be in jeopardy.
3. Public Education and Government (PEG) access -- School districts often take advantage of these forums to air school board meetings and other informational announcements about their schools. SB 117 will limit the number of PEG channels with new restrictions that will be difficult to meet, even with the changes in the substitute bill. While we understand the need for the efficient use of these PEG access channels, the changes in SB 117 still appear drastic.

Again, we appreciate this opportunity to raise concerns about SB 117. We hope to work with you, the bill sponsor, and other stakeholders to make changes in the bill to address the needs of schools.

Thank you for your consideration. We will be happy to address your questions.