

In Congress Now: Telecommunications Legislation

DISAPPROVAL OF FCC MEDIA OWNERSHIP RULE

- S.J.Res. 28, offered Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.)
- Approved by the Senate on May 15, 2008, by voice vote
- Resolution disapproves of an FCC decision in December 2007 allowing newspapers in top markets to merge with broadcasters in the same city.
- Opposed by the White House, requires House and presidential approval

DIGITAL TELEVISION BORDER FIX ACT

- S. 2507, offered by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas)
- Response to the transition from analog to digital broadcast signals scheduled for Feb. 17, 2009
- Would allow stations within 50 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border to continue analog broadcasts through Feb. 17, 2014
- Marked up by the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee on April 24, 2008

REIMBURSEMENTS FROM THE DIGITAL TELEVISION TRANSITION AND PUBLIC SAFETY FUND

- S. 2607, introduced by Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) in February, would apply \$65 million for equipment upgrades for low-power television stations for every fiscal year until 2012.
- Makes a technical correction to Section 3009 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005
- Marked up by the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee on April 24, 2008
- Companion measure (H.R. 5696) offered by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) on April 3, 2008

INTEROPERABLE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS ACT

- S. 385, offered by Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii)
- Amends the Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 for a grant program to assist public agencies in establishing the interoperability of public safety emergency communications
- Marked up the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee on Feb. 13, 2007

911 MODERNIZATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY ACT

- H.R. 3403, sponsored by Rep. Bart Gordon (D-Tenn.)
- Gives Voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service providers access to the emergency infrastructure to deliver 911 calls and provide location and callback information
- Requires the 911 Implementation and Coordination Office to develop a national plan to quickly move the nation from the current 911 system to an interoperable IP-based emergency response network that can handle voice, video and data traffic
- Passed the House on Nov. 13, 2007
- H.R. 3403 passed the Senate by unanimous consent on June 16, 2008, with an amendment by Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii).
- Similar to a Senate bill (S. 428) sponsored by Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), which passed the Senate on Feb. 26, 2008