

### **Sloan at FCC IAC Meeting**

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) participated in the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (IAC). The IAC members are appointed by the FCC Chairman and represent state, local, and tribal governments' telecommunications interests. The IAC brings constituent interests to the attention of Commissioners and staff and serve as a means to bring FCC issues to the attention of local governments.

For example, the Chairman of the FCC is concerned about the number of wireless devices (e.g., cell phones) that are stolen and used for illegal purposes, but the FCC had no data on how many devices are stolen each year. The Lawrence Police Department and Kansas Bureau of Investigation provided me data that I forwarded to the FCC. We provided them the first accurate, as opposed to anecdotal, data that demonstrates the seriousness of the issue and validates the FCC Chairman's belief that this is an area of concern to consumers and the Commission should be working with device manufacturers to make thefts less attractive.

In conjunction with the stolen phone issue, I have been concerned about the use of pre-paid phones for criminal activities. At my request, presentations were made at the IAC meeting about the prevalence of such devices (approximately 24 percent of wireless devices sold are pre-paid) and the difficulties that law enforcement officers have in identifying the owners of such devices when they are used in the commission of a crime. I will draft a policy recommendation to the FCC Commissioners on this subject that will be reviewed and revised as necessary by the full IAC for submission to the Commissioners.

During a previous IAC meeting, I recommended that consumer complaints be categorized by state and on a per capita basis for each state, so that the large states (e.g., California) and companies (e.g., Verizon, ATT, Sprint, T-Mobile) through sheer numbers do not mask proportionately higher problem rates in smaller states and with smaller providers. The FCC is now compiling and releasing that data so that consumers can be better informed and state officials can intercede on consumers' behalf. The data can be found at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>. The Consumer Protection Bureau, at my suggestion, is exploring how to make such data more readily available to state and local regulators so that consumer problems are better known locally and local officials are able to intervene on their behalf.

FCC staff briefed us on the Commissioners' decision to preempt state laws in North Carolina and Tennessee that limited or prohibited the development of municipal (local government) broadband systems. The Commissioners determined that the value of competition to improve services and reduce costs to customers was more important than preventing public sector investments in competition with private sector providers.

Rep. Sloan is Chairman of the Vision 2020 Committee and a member of the Transportation and Agriculture & Natural Resources Committees. He serves on several federal advisory committees related to energy, telecommunications, and water policies.