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April 12, 2017

Fierce Cable SCTE to offer NCTC member companies discounted training, other perks

Washington Post Most Americans want to let cities build and sell homegrown Internet service

The Hill Tech lobby goes to bat on net neutrality

bgr.com A lot of people don't like Netflix's new ratings system

The Wrap Netflix Plans to Move Productions to California, 'Invest in Infrastructure,'

Gov. Bill Haslam's effort to connect rural Tennesseans to broadband internet service became a reality on Monday after the House passed the amended version, though not without criticism and skepticism from rural lawmakers and both sides of the aisle.



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It passed the House 93-4. **The Senate passed the bill** a week earlier and hailed the effort that has been sought after by rural lawmakers for several years. Industry organizations including TN

Telecommunications Association and Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association lauded the passage and program. Other organizations, like Tennessee Wireless, opposed the legislation, saying it created unfair business environments and providers were already offering services across the state.

The program will provide \$30 million over three years in grants to rural electric cooperatives to provide broadband internet service to their customers. The state currently ranks 29th in broadband access and more than a third of the state does not have access. The legislation was amended by the legislature to add provisions for video service and reduce minimum speeds, and reduced the funding allocation. "We have taken a piece of legislation ... and made it better," said Rep. David Hawk, R-Greenville, who sponsored the legislation on behalf of Haslam.

The amended version allows for video service to be sold as part of the broadband service, which was not part of Haslam's original proposal. The Senate also amended the minimum speed that could be

[Ted Sarandos Says](#)

[Zap2It Cable Top 25 for Week Ending April 9](#)

[Philadelphia Inquirer Lt. Gov. Stack under scrutiny by Pa. inspector general](#)

[Philadelphia Daily News So many questions for Lt. Gov. Stack \(and Gov. Wolf\)](#)

provided from federal standard 25 megabits per second to 10 megabits per second and reduced the funding allocation from \$45 million to \$30 million.

It has faced little opposition through its journey to Haslam's desk, but did have opposition from wireless providers across the state who said it would create unfair competition and much of the state was already covered by wireless services through cellular service or satellite providers. Rep. John Ray Clemmons, D-Nashville, said praised the goal of the program but said the funding allocation was far short of what is necessary. "I wish we were putting real money and resources that are available to us right now as a state," Clemmons said.

State lawmakers are currently facing a state budget surplus of nearly \$2 billion in recurring and non-recurring, one-time, dollars. Republicans also opposed the legislation, including some who represent rural districts the legislation aims to benefit most, though they too support the intent. Rep. Jason Zachary, R-Knoxville, said the legislation would do little to improve access to residential customers, and instead utility providers to expand in highly populated areas first before going into rural areas. Rep. Andy Holt, R-Dresden, said the funding allocation was "minuscule." Grants will be awarded through a competitive selection process based on how many are served in the current area, scalability, higher speeds. – *Nashville Tennessean*

Big internet firms on Tuesday told federal regulators that they would oppose Republicans' plans to roll back net Obama-era neutrality rules, [adding to signs of a looming political clash](#).

The Internet Association, a trade group that includes companies such as of Netflix Inc. and Facebook Inc., told Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai in a meeting that it "continues its vigorous support of the FCC's [net-neutrality] order," the group said in a regulatory filing. It added that the net-neutrality rules are "a vital component of the free and open internet." The FCC declined to comment.

Individual companies involved in the group, such as Alphabet Inc.'s Google, didn't comment on the meeting, but the organization itself indicated its members were united in their view. "The internet industry is uniform in its belief that net neutrality preserves the consumer experience, competition, and innovation online," the group said. "In other words, existing net-neutrality rules should be enforced and kept intact."

Tuesday's meeting followed one last week in which Mr. Pai, who was appointed chairman by President Donald Trump, suggested privately to telecommunications industry groups that he is aiming [to propose reversing the FCC's 2015 net-neutrality order](#) soon. Those rules require internet-service providers such as cable and wireless firms to treat all internet traffic the same. The internet-service providers generally have opposed the rules, arguing that the FCC went too far in reclassifying them as common carriers. They say they support the basic outlines of net neutrality, however.

The plan, still being developed by Mr. Pai, apparently is expected to attempt to preserve basic elements of net neutrality, such as no blocking or throttling, while eventually shifting oversight responsibility to the Federal Trade Commission and reversing the reclassification. After his meeting last week, word of his plans quickly spread through the internet community, and activists said they were mobilizing to fight it, setting up a replay of epic battles in 2014 and 2015 over net neutrality.

Many consumer groups and congressional Democrats argue that the current rules—including reclassification—are necessary to preserve competition. Telecommunications firms have said little publicly. The Internet Association's regulatory filing holds out some potential room for compromise. The association said that while it "continues its work to protect consumers by maintaining existing FCC rules, its primary focus is on the end result—meaningful net-neutrality rules that withstand the test of time."

The association has previously argued that reclassification of internet-service providers as common carriers isn't necessary to effective open-internet regulation. Still, Tuesday's regulatory filing suggests the group has begun to mount a vigorous defense of the existing FCC rules. Notably, the group said the rules should be enforced by the FCC. Any effort by Mr. Pai to tamper with the reclassification is also likely to be met by fierce opposition from consumer groups and Democrats on Capitol Hill. – *Wall Street Journal*

Spectrum cable company is hiring off-duty Cleveland police officers to accompany workers on house calls around the city after a string of violent robberies against employees working in marked trucks, including the cable company. Five workers have been robbed at gunpoint since Feb. 20 and a

Spectrum worker was shot four times during a house call on Jan. 24, according to Cleveland police. All six incidents happened between 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Spectrum said in an emailed statement that they are committed to keeping their employees safe. "The safety of our employees and our customers is always our highest priority as we serve local residents and businesses, and we have been working with law enforcement in the aftermath of these incidents," the statement says. A company spokesman declined further comment.

The officers ride around in full uniform with the employees and stand near the workers when they're working outside or going to their trucks for equipment. The Spectrum employee was shot four times Jan. 24 while standing behind his truck putting on climbing equipment, police said. Someone drove by in a car and fired at least 10 gunshots at the 32-year-old employee. The shooters sped off, police reports say. The employee was taken to University Hospitals for injuries that were not life threatening.

Two teenagers are charged in a similar March 5 robbery. The teens rummaged through a Direct TV worker's van, then stole the 37-year-old employee's wallet and two cellphones at gunpoint when he returned, police said. – **Cleveland Plain Dealer**

Rep. Tom Marino is resigning from Congress to become the next drug czar, according to CBS News. Marino, a 64-year-old Republican from Williamsport, is being tapped to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy, [the network is reporting](#). A special election will be held in Pennsylvania to replace his seat in the House. Marino's office had no comment when reached Tuesday afternoon by PennLive.

The congressman, who was elected during the tea party wave in 2010, is a former federal prosecutor and as a House member introduced the Transnational Drug Trafficking Act, and Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act, which became law. Marino was one of President Donald Trump's earliest supporters, campaigning for the Republican candidate throughout Pennsylvania during the primary and general election. His loyalty earned him a spot in the VIP box at the Republican National Convention. Marino will need Senate confirmation to officially become the drug czar. – [pennlive.com](#)

