

Rep. Sloan at FCC Advisory Committee Meeting

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) participated in the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (IAC) meeting. Comprised of state legislators and regulators, city and county government representatives, and tribal representatives, the IAC advises the Commission on how proposed FCC rules will affect our constituencies and provides information to the Commission about communications problems experienced by consumers.

IAC members heard presentations from the FCC staff about the new Consumer Complaint Portal that will provide both a way for consumers making complaints to track their complaint through the process and the FCC with valuable data about problems consumers are having with telecommunications companies. Presentations were also made about Robo calls and the problems experienced by public safety offices when such calls are made that tie up lines to report emergencies, "Spoofing" or the hijacking of a legitimate telephone number and identification by an unscrupulous telemarketer, and the E-Rate modernization. E-rates are federal assistance to schools and libraries to make high speed Internet services more affordable.

Rep. Sloan, on behalf of the IAC, is drafting recommendations to the Commission related to permitting public safety organizations to join the Do-Not-Call Registry. While the Registry is currently limited to individuals, the IAC believes that unsolicited marketing calls that jeopardize public safety by tying up telephone lines should be halted. He also is drafting comments and recommendations related to "spoofing" or the hijacking of one person's communications number and identity by another to subsequently make marketing or other calls. The intent of spoofer is to have people with caller ID accept the call, which they otherwise might reject or ignore. Unfortunately, often the number and identification being spoofed belongs to law enforcement or another government agency. When consumers receive those calls from the spoofer, they frequently then block future calls from that number. This can be a problem if the county Sheriff has a system to place calls warning of an approaching tornado, escaped felon, lost child, or other emergency and the consumer has blocked the Sheriff's number.

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 energy and telecommunications advisory committees and is nationally recognized for his work on energy, water, and telecommunications policies.