

June 2, 2005

Ms. Glenda E. Hood
Secretary of State
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

Dear Secretary Hood:

I transmit to you Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 1322, an act relating to the regulation of communication, with my signature.

Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 1322 reflects the recommendations of many stakeholders and the careful deliberation of many committee hearings. Among other accomplishments, the bill helps put Florida at the forefront of the technology revolution by deregulating broadband services. The bill also clarifies the application of the communications services tax, protects the competitive marketplace relative to the provision of broadband and advanced telecommunications services, and expands Lifeline eligibility.

The bill also establishes enhanced accountability and ethical standards for Public Service Commission members. However, I am concerned about provisions of the bill that clarify legislative intent to allow commissioners to attend industry-sponsored events at the same rate – or even a lower rate -- than is available to other conference participants. While the bill clarifies that this practice does not constitute a gift to a commissioner, these provisions could lead to regulated utilities (the very entities that are subject to PSC oversight) subsidizing the expenses of PSC commissioners.

I believe this provision of the bill does not set the bar high enough for PSC commissioners, who should be held to the highest ethical standards. I strongly encourage the members of the Public Service Commission – who I know share in this belief – to move forward with efforts to amend their code of ethics as necessary to reflect this commitment to the public and ensure that this provision of the bill is not misused.

I hereby transmit Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 1322 with my signature.

Sincerely,

Jeb Bush