



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting
House Bill 5745, An Act Concerning the Creation of Enterprise
Funds for Municipal Broadband Services**

Senator Cassano, Representative McCarthy Vahey, and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee:

My name is David McGuire, and I am executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting this testimony to encourage the committee to amend House Bill 5745, An Act Concerning the Creation of Enterprise Funds for Municipal Broadband Services to require that municipal broadband services comply with network neutrality policies and to support the amended bill.

The ACLU-CT believes in defending free speech and protecting First Amendment rights. The internet is central to how Connecticut residents and Americans everywhere express their opinions, share their knowledge, and learn from one another. Equal access to information is imperative for everyone to participate in our democracy.

The Federal Communications Commission's December 2017 decision to repeal network neutrality principles for internet service providers threatens people's ability to participate in democracy via the internet. Without network neutrality, internet service companies can determine which content we can see, how quickly we can access it, and how much we pay for it.

This bill is an ideal vehicle to preserve network neutrality in Connecticut's municipalities and, thus, protect the right to free speech. If amended to require that municipal broadband services follow network neutrality policies, it would protect the free speech rights of Connecticut residents by providing an alternative to internet service providers that choose not to continue to follow critical network neutrality policies. This alternative route to internet access can provide a way to protect the neutrality of the internet and the freedom to and of

information that is key to a healthy American democracy. The ACLU-CT encourages this committee to amend House Bill 5745 to protect network neutrality in municipal broadband services and to support the amended bill.