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Two Beaver County state legislators have signed onto a bipartisan letter to the Federal Communications Commission's chairman urging him to finalize rules ensuring broadband internet access for rural Pennsylvania residents.

State Sen. Camera Bartolotta, R-46, Carroll Township, Washington County, and **state Rep. Rob Matzie**, D-16, Ambridge, and 40 colleagues sent the letter to FCC Chairman Ajit Pai asking him to back a rule allowing at least three "white space" channels in every market be designated for broadband internet use. "If you do so, we believe this will lead the private sector and companies like Microsoft to work on implementing new technologies that have the ability to transform rural communities with affordable and reliable broadband," the legislators wrote.

Rural broadband access would "transform education, empower workers and create a broader market for business in rural parts of Pennsylvania and around the country," the legislators told Pai. "It is economically and educationally imperative," they said, "that you act on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians and millions of citizens of the United States so that they, too, have access to the same opportunities that this technology provides to the rest of the country."

In a statement on the letter, **state Rep. Pam Snyder**, D-Greene County, reiterated the benefits broadband access would have on rural Pennsylvanians. "By improving the technological advances available in rural communities, people will be better equipped with more educational and economic opportunities," she said. Snyder has fought for years to improve internet speed and access in the state's rural areas, citing her own issues using the internet on her Greene County property.

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Following a House Consumer Affairs Committee hearing in Waynesburg in August 2016, **Snyder introduced a bill** to require higher download and upload speeds in rural areas. That bill never moved out of the Consumer Affairs Committee. Last July, Snyder and **state Rep. Kristin Hill**, R-York County, introduced House Bill 1642 to expand the availability of high-speed broadband service in

“underserved and unserved areas” of the state.

The two legislators circulated a co-sponsor memo that painted an unsettling picture of the impact slow internet service has on rural students. “In these locations one can often arrive at schools 30 minutes before the start of the school day and observe parents in their idling cars while their children feverishly work to complete their computer homework assignments using the school Wi-Fi,” the memo said, “because high-speed broadband internet is unavailable in their residential areas.” House Bill 1642 remains before the State Government Committee. – **Beaver County Times**

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Oregon senators voted overwhelmingly Thursday for a bill that seeks to preserve net neutrality protections for the internet, sending it to Gov. Kate Brown for her signature. She has previously indicated support for the issue.

The Federal Communications Commission, now led by Trump administration appointees, recently repealed rules that enforced net neutrality - the principle that all internet traffic be treated equally. Internet providers and online activists are at odds over the issue. Comcast and other big companies, joined by congressional Republicans, say any regulation could stifle online innovation.

Democrats and advocates of an open internet fear that without net neutrality, big internet companies could block or slow access to certain sites unless those sites or internet subscribers pay extra. Congress gave the federal government authority for setting the rules for the internet, so

Oregon and other states came up with a workaround. [House Bill 4155](#) mandates that state and local governments contract only with companies that abide by the principles of net neutrality.

The bill is unlikely to have a direct impact on the biggest internet companies. Comcast, for example, reported nearly \$85 billion in revenue in 2017. By contrast, its contracts with the city of Portland totaled less than \$1.3 million last year. However, local rules could make internet companies think twice about going against net neutrality. And the online protections are likely to return with the next Democratic president. HB 4155 passed the Senate 21-7 on Thursday after winning approval in the House earlier in the week, 40-17. Several Republicans in each chamber joined Democrats in supporting the bill. – *Portland Oregonian*

YouTube last year stopped hiring white and Asian males for technical positions because they didn't help the world's largest video site achieve its goals for improving diversity, according to a civil lawsuit filed by a former employee.

The lawsuit, filed by Arne Wilberg, a white male who worked at Google for nine years, including four years as a recruiter at YouTube, alleges the division of Alphabet Inc.'s Google set quotas for hiring minorities. Last spring, YouTube recruiters were allegedly instructed to cancel interviews with applicants who weren't female, black or Hispanic, and to "purge entirely" the applications of people who didn't fit those categories, the lawsuit claims.

A Google spokeswoman said the company will vigorously defend itself in the lawsuit. "We have a clear policy to hire candidates based on their merit, not their identity," she said in a statement. "At the same time, we unapologetically try to find a diverse pool of qualified candidates for open roles, as this helps us hire the best people, improve our culture, and build better products." People familiar with YouTube's and Google's hiring practices in interviews corroborated some of the lawsuit's allegations, including the hiring freeze of white and Asian technical employees, and YouTube's use of quotas.

Mr. Wilberg's lawsuit, filed in January in California's San Mateo County Superior Court, alleges that Google discriminated against him for his sex and race, retaliated by firing him when he complained, and in the process violated antidiscrimination laws. Mr. Wilberg declined to comment through his attorney. The lawsuit highlights the tension facing the technology industry as it tries to boost minority hiring, a stated goal of many large companies, including Google. It also threatens to ignite simmering controversy about Silicon Valley's politics and whether its predominantly liberal ideology is affecting how companies operate.

Google in particular has found itself in [the middle of the gender debate](#) following dueling lawsuits in January, one that alleged [the company discriminated against women](#), the other claiming discrimination against conservative white men. The latter suit was filed by [plaintiff James Damore](#), an engineer who was fired from the company last year for distributing a memo that suggested men were better suited to certain tech jobs than women. Google has said it disagrees with the allegations in those suits. Mr. Wilberg, 40, alleges he complained to multiple managers at YouTube about its hiring practices over the past two years, and elevated those complaints to Google managers before he was ultimately fired last November.

Employers are allowed to undertake initiatives to promote diversity hiring, employment lawyers say. But under Title VII, the federal antidiscrimination law, employers aren't allowed to make hiring decisions based on race and gender among other protected classes. That means they can't employ practices like hiring quotas based on race or only hiring one type of minority candidate, attorneys say. Such practices would also run afoul of California laws.

Google's internal website says "there is no such thing as a 'diversity headcount'" at the company, according to one employee. The site also says it has a small program that allows hiring managers to bring on candidates from underrepresented groups. Silicon Valley has faced public scrutiny over the amount of diversity in its workforce. The technology industry is more white (68.5%) than the overall U.S. private-sector workforce (63.5%), according to data collected by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2014. Women make up about 30% of employees at leading tech companies in Silicon Valley, while they account for about 49% of workers at non-tech firms in the same region.

About 69% of Google's employees last year were men, down 1 percentage point from 2014, the company said. The portion of Google's workforce that is white or Asian has remained at 91% since 2014. Google recruiters are responsible for identifying candidates, but hiring decisions are ultimately up to hiring committees, according to Google. YouTube has about 23,000 employees, according to an

estimate by networking site LinkedIn Corp. Alphabet had 80,110 full-time employees at year-end, according to a company filing.

YouTube has its own group of roughly 20 recruiters, with a separate Google team overseeing all operations, according to the complaint and people familiar with YouTube's and Google's hiring practices. The lawsuit filed by Mr. Wilberg and people familiar with the hiring practices allege that since at least 2016, YouTube recruiters had hiring quotas or targets for "diversity candidates," including black, Hispanic and female candidates. For example, in the first quarter of 2016, recruiters were expected to hire five new employees each, all of them from underrepresented groups, the lawsuit alleges.

Recruiters used what was known internally as a "diversity tracker," to track minority hiring, the people familiar with hiring practices at YouTube and Google said. For the week of March 20, 2017, for example, the team tracked a year-to-date goal of 21 African-American hires, with one actually hired in that period, according to an internal YouTube email attached as an exhibit to the lawsuit. Mr. Wilberg alleges his performance reviews suffered after he declined to adhere to YouTube's diversity hiring goals.

In the spring of 2016, Google's human-resources department launched an investigation into YouTube's hiring practices, interviewing each recruiter, the lawsuit alleges. The investigation appeared to be ongoing through the end of 2017, the lawsuit alleged. YouTube allegedly tried to cover up the hiring practices in two instances, according to the complaint and a person familiar with the matter. In January 2016, Mr. Wilberg alleges, he was told in a meeting that YouTube had to "clean up" its diversity hiring practices, and that managers deleted all email messages about those goals. Sometime in mid-2017, YouTube told recruiting staff to stop tracking the number of hires from minority groups and instructed them not to make hiring decisions based on diversity status, according to the lawsuit and a person familiar with the matter. — *Wall Street Journal*

Make that eight candidates in the race to represent the Lehigh Valley in Congress next year. Republican Dan David announced Thursday that he is switching from the Lehigh Valley-based 7th District to the new 4th District, which includes most of Montgomery County and part of southern Berks County. David said **when he announced his campaign** in the former 15th District — now relabeled as the 7th in the state Supreme Court's new congressional map — that he had moved to Alburty last year and previously lived in Montgomery County. A news release Thursday about his decision to switch districts identifies him as from Skippack, Montgomery County.

David, 49, co-founded GeolInvesting, an equities markets research firm, and is featured in "The China Hustle," a documentary that premiered last fall about how Chinese and American investors took advantage of lax Chinese laws about defrauding foreign investors. The remaining Republicans vying in the 7th District are former Lehigh County commissioner Dean Browning, state Rep. Ryan Mackenzie, and Lehigh County commissioner Marty Nothstein.

The winner of that GOP primary will face one of what's currently a field of five Democrats: Allentown pastor Greg Edwards, former Allentown solicitor Susan Wild, Northampton County District Attorney John Morganelli, veteran Dave Weidman of Emmaus, and Rick Daugherty, a social worker and former congressional candidate. — Allentown Morning Call

The Greens. The Cohens. The Stacks. The Blackwells. The Williamses. The Goodes. The Rizzos. The Tartagliones.

Doesn't it sometimes feel as if the same dozen families have always — and will always — run Philly? We got word this week that ex-State Sen. Vince Fumo's son, Vincent Jr., applied for the city's new school board. Made up of local officials, the panel will **replace the state-created School Reform Commission** later this year.

The possibility of another Fumo getting into politics boggles the mind: Vince Fumo, who was **found guilty of 137 counts** in 2009, is the **embodiment of political corruption** in Philadelphia. Vincent Jr. also recently **told Philadelphia Magazine** that his father "is a person who has no care in the world about other humans other than how they can make him appear greater." So why would he want to get into the old man's game? Then again, maybe it shouldn't come as a surprise that junior is eyeing the business. He is an election board worker, and **donated** \$500 to his friend Tom Wyatt's 2018 campaign for state representative in South Philly.

Reached via email, Vincent Jr. confirmed that he made a bid for the school board. He said he is a founding member of the advisory council for Andrew Jackson School in South Philly, which his

daughter attends. He also sat on the committee that helped recruit Jackson's principal. Those experiences left him "increasingly upset with the bureaucracy at the School District, so of course I jumped at the chance to apply," he said.

He didn't make the cut, though. A nominating panel **announced this week** that it chose 27 candidates for the city's school board, and Vincent Jr. wasn't on the list. That didn't surprise him: "I knew having my last name would be a detriment publicly for the mayor." (In a past life, Mayor Kenney was Vince Fumo's protégé, rising from his intern to chief-of-staff. Kenney **now says** he hasn't talked to the Prince of Darkness for years.)

Vincent Jr. doesn't sound like he's given up on politics. "I've always been a very active citizen," he said, "and lately I've been trying to find my way to do more." In fact, his name may be on the ballot this May: He's running for committee person. – *Philadelphia Daily News*

