

## **Resolution #7**

### **SUPPORT ALL UNITED EFFORTS TO STOP THE DEREGULATION OF LEGACY TELEPHONE SERVICE, SAVE GOOD UNION JOBS, AND TO PROTECT CONSUMERS.**

PRESENTED BY: **COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA, DISTRICT NINE**

WHEREAS, AB 2395 (Low) was introduced in the California 2016 Legislative session. AB 2395 would allow a telephone corporation, such as AT&T, to withdraw voice telephone service to a community after January 1, 2020. The telephone corporation would simply need to certify to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) that there was one “alternative voice service available.” If there is no “alternative” available, the telephone corporation would be allowed to abandon the area after one year, with only 90 days advance notice to consumers. This could leave rural communities with no telecommunications service; and

WHEREAS, even if an alternative provider is available, the new provider would no longer have to meet the basic voice service quality standards established by the CPUC. Instead, AB 2395 replaces the entire body of protections with four largely undefined criteria: voice service, real time two-way communications, 911 access, and back-up power information; and

WHEREAS, type of services eliminated would include internet access, services for people with disabilities, lifeline subsidies for low-income households, and minimum standards for reliability and quality. This could leave many California consumers with higher rates and inferior service, if they're left with any service at all; and

WHEREAS, allowing telephone companies to discontinue voice service, these companies will also be able to abandon this infrastructure and discontinue broadband internet service to many areas. The impact to businesses, especially small rural businesses, would be devastating; and

WHEREAS, businesses will often not locate in communities without high-speed wired broadband, and many credit or debit card transactions can't be supported by strictly wireless service. That means existing businesses could suddenly find themselves unable to process transactions and be forced to relocate or shut down. This would absolutely lead to further job loss and economic stagnation in already struggling areas of rural California; and

WHEREAS, the Communications Workers of America (CWA), District 9 along with coalition partners such as The Utility Reform Network (TURN), Hernández Strategy Group, LLC, BLUE Green Alliance (BGA), Greenlining, Consumer Federation of California and the California Labor Federation and many of their affiliates opposed AB 2395 and lobbied jointly to stop the bill; and

WHEREAS, the California Labor Federation lobbying team lobbied alongside the Communications Workers of America CWA, District 9 tirelessly to defeat AT&T's efforts to deregulate and abandon the copper-based telephone service; and

Continued

WHEREAS, jointly and united we lobbied the Chairs, all committee members on both committees, the governor's office and had the leadership from Communications Workers of America, District 9 and the California Labor Federation meet with the Speaker; and

WHEREAS, CWA members who would be impacted by the passing of AB 2395 showed up at the Capitol to all the hearings in a sea of bright orange shirts that said "Vote No on AB 2395". They filled the committee hearing room and one by one went to the mic and opposed AB2395; and

WHEREAS, a true example of solidarity, when a joint opposition labor letter with all the different union logos was sent to the committee members; and

WHEREAS, the commitment to each other of no amendments, just kill the bill was a powerful tool because we stood united; and

WHEREAS, despite their powerful presence at the Capitol and their reputation nationwide as a Communications Giant, along with the unlimited financial and lobbying resources they poured into their campaign to pass AB2395, when Labor United we were able to defeat them;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the California Federation of Labor along with all its affiliates will UNITE and SUPPORT all efforts to STOP AT&T or any Communications Corporation trying to pass legislation that will de-regulate legacy telephone service, take away Consumer protections and destroy good union jobs in California.

*Adopted by Delegates*