

*Insect for  
Alucio Grassley*

**SENATOR GRASSLEY'S OPENING STATEMENT, SENATE  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HEARING "REAUTHORIZATION OF  
THE SATELLITE TELEVISION EXTENSION AND LOCALISM  
ACT," MARCH 26, 2014**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your holding this hearing, and I also thank the witnesses for their testimony today.

The Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act, also known as STELA, is an important piece of legislation. Among other things, STELA provides satellite operators with a compulsory copyright license to retransmit distant over-the-air television signals to American families who otherwise wouldn't have access to their current television programming. Given the fact that this license is set to expire in December, if Congress doesn't act to reauthorize STELA, as many as 1.5 million unserved American households could be deprived of the news they rely on and the television programming they presently enjoy.

The Satellite Home Viewer Act first established the distant signal license in 1998. This law was intended, with the Cable Act, to foster competition and protect consumers. Since then, we've always come together to enact satellite reauthorization legislation that both Democrats and Republicans could agree on.

I know that there are a number of other issues being discussed, many dealing with statutory provisions governing the broadcast industry that lie primarily within the jurisdiction of the Commerce Committee. I believe that all these issues warrant careful study and consideration, and I'm glad that we're beginning our discussion of them.

There has been a tremendous amount of innovation and technological advancement in the communications industry. Markets have evolved and the communications landscape has changed dramatically since these laws first were enacted. So, it may be more productive to look into these issues within the context of a broader review of the nation's communications laws and our effort to update



those laws to bring them in line with the ever-transforming and vibrant communications marketplace.

In Iowa, we face both urban and rural communications issues. In rural Iowa, some of my constituents are faced with the challenge of not being able to receive over-the-air broadcast signals. Broadband access also can be a challenge in these rural areas. It's important that the challenges facing rural America aren't left out of these broader discussions.

My hope is that we'll be able to continue in the tradition of bipartisanship by coming together to pass a consensus STELA reauthorization bill before time runs out at the end of the year. I look forward to working with the Chairman on this legislative effort.