



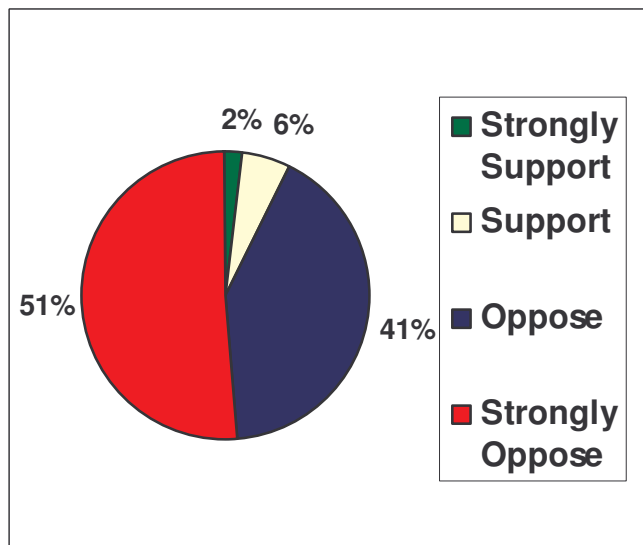
THE COMMON INTEREST REPORTS:

MEMBERS' VIEWS ON THE QWEST PRICE DEREGULATION PROPOSAL

105 randomly assigned members of The Common Interest reviewed briefing materials on the topic and then answered a questionnaire.

Here are the views of those 105 members:

Do you support or oppose Qwest's proposal regarding regulation of prices for local landline phone service?

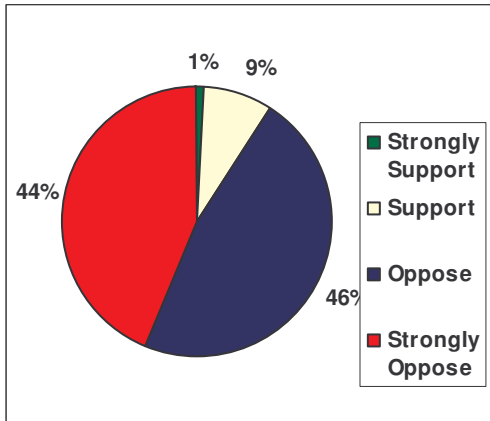


Total Support: 8%

Total Oppose: 92%

Position of The Common Interest: Oppose

Do you support or oppose Qwest's proposal regarding regulation of prices for *residential* landline phone service specifically?

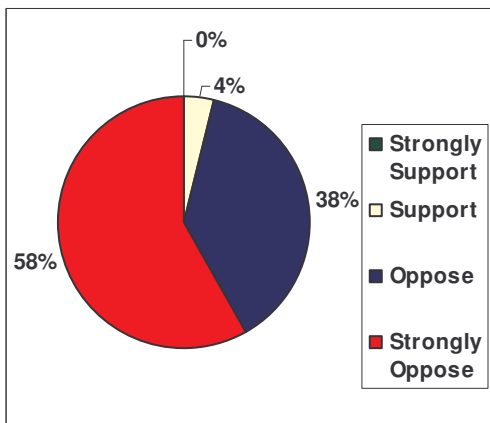


Total Support: 10%

Total Oppose: 90%

Position of The Common Interest: Oppose

Do you support or oppose Qwest's proposal regarding regulation of prices for *small business* landline phone service specifically?

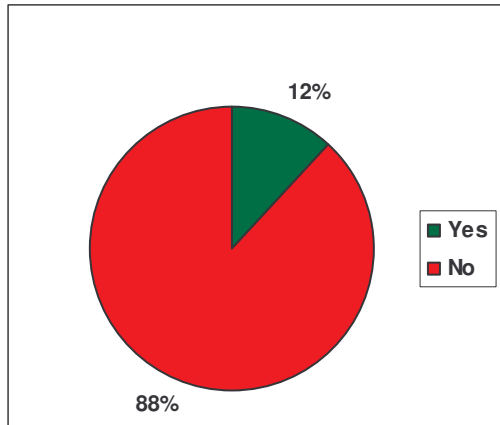


Total Support: 4%

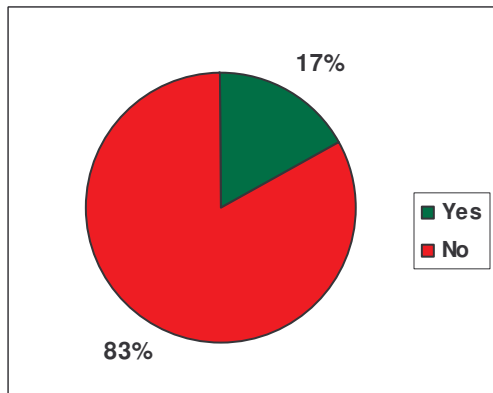
Total Oppose: 96%

Position of The Common Interest: Oppose

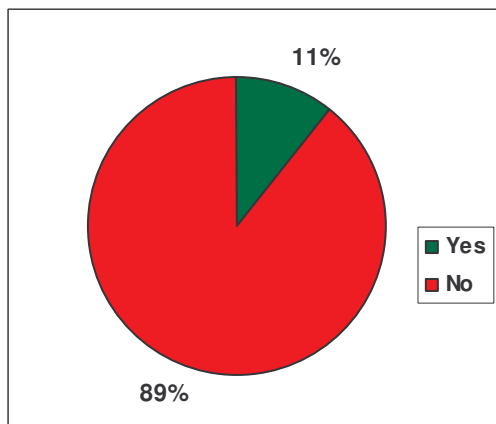
Do you believe that effective competition for Qwest's landline local service exists?



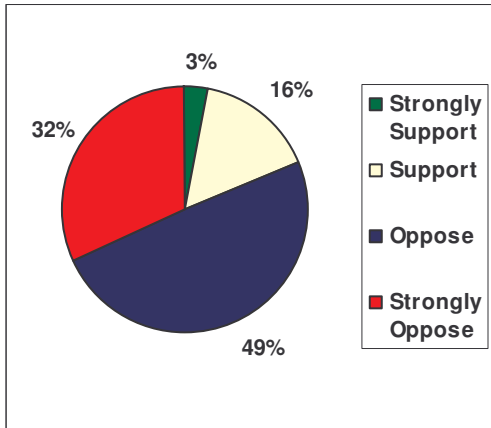
Do you believe that effective competition for Qwest's landline local services exists for residences specifically?



Do you believe that effective competition for Qwest's landline local services exists for *small businesses* specifically?



If the proposal were amended to sunset (or expire) in three years, would you support or oppose the proposal?

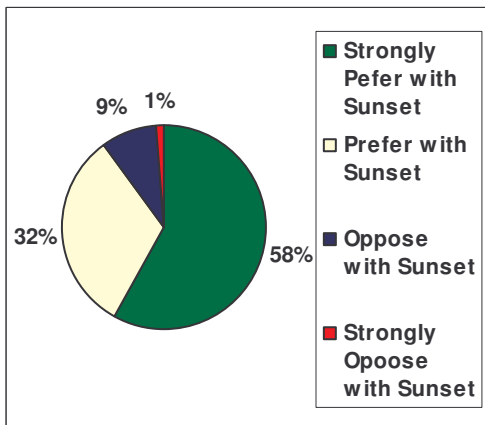


Total Support with Sunset Amendment: 19%

Total Oppose with Sunset Amendment: 81%

Position of The Common Interest: Oppose even with a Sunset Amendment

Assuming that the proposal was going to pass this year, would you prefer it with or without the three year sunset amendment?

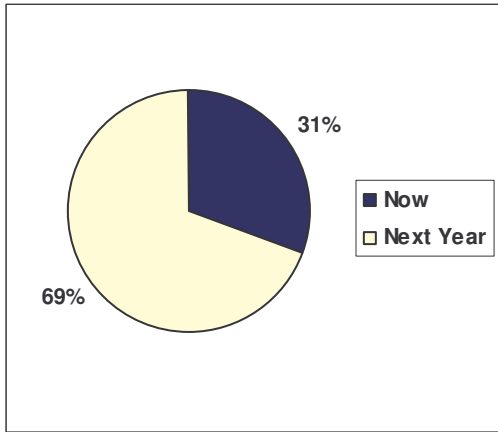


Total Prefer with Sunset if Passes: 90%

Total Oppose with Sunset if Passes: 10%

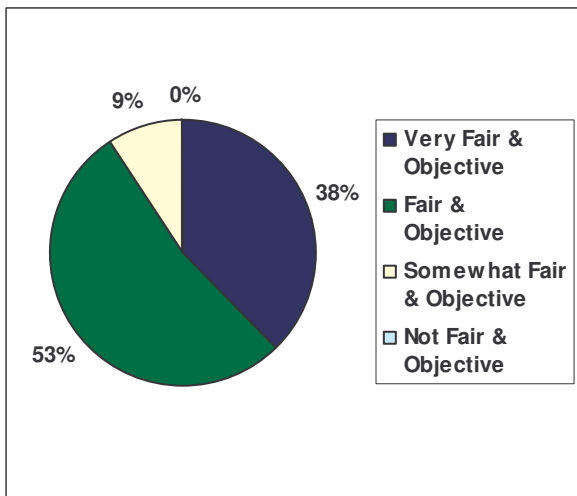
Position of The Common Interest if Going to Pass: Support Sunset Amendment

Many members of the telecommunications industry appear to support the suggestion of changing all telecommunications legislation next year. If this legislation were going to be rewritten next year, do you think it would be better to decide the local landline price regulation issue now or next year?



Position of The Common Interest if Telecommunication Legislation to be Rewritten Next Year: Oppose Price Deregulation this Year, Support Deciding Price Deregulation next Year

Did you think the briefing materials treated the issue fairly and objectively?



What would you like to say to Idaho legislators about this issue?

[Answers have been sorted thematically]

Wait Until More Competition

No need to hurry on this. Deregulation will come but it needs to wait until cell phones can and do provide the same range of service at the same cost as landlines.

Reconsider when more cell-only and internet calling exists

Clearly cell phone use is on the rise, and this proposal may be viable in a few years. However, given the small number of people who rely entirely on cell phones now, they do not yet constitute effective competition.

Deregulation is premature. It may well be coming, but if we merely adjust up the rates for land line services then cell service will see little need to hold prices down and the spiral will continue.

The technology may develop at some point for cell phones to be effective competition for land lines, but it does not at present.

Wait a few more years to determine if landline usage really is going to decline.

Wait.

Do not pass legislation allowing the de-regulation of phone service. De-regulation of phone service should only come if and when there is truly competitive land line service.

Wait until cell, VOIP and other competition is more readily available. Ask QWEST to come back in two years.

Don't get in any hurry to do this.

There are not alternatives for phone service. Other alternatives may develop but they aren't here yet. Please wait.

Wait longer to deregulate. Wait until the playing field is level - it's not where we live.

Work to vote against the specific proposal; but remain engaged to find a way to deregulate soon, and with more safeguards (e.g., a "sunset" to a deregulation law requiring new legislation to keep deregulation in place).

I don't think Idaho is ready for this yet based on the level of available competition. Cell phone service is not reliable enough to rely on full time in rural areas. Also, people who depend on modems for internet service can't use cell phones.

This proposal should wait until there are other landline services available. Nothing deregulated ever goes down in cost!

You'd better find out what the actual use is for land and cell, and then determine if there really is a competitive alternative.

I would wait until next year before any action is taken.

Wait 5 years to allow cell service to become more prevalent before looking into this issue again.

Insufficient Competition to Warrant Price Deregulation

How many people own cell phones is irrelevant to me. The question is how many people have, are willing and can afford to "cut the cord". The studies indicate that at the present only about 5% are willing to.

Do not de-regulate. The PUC allows for profit in local services. There is no option but Q-west for most Idahoans.

Why should Qwest customers with no competitive options be forced to pay additional fees?

This is an effort by a virtual monopoly to enable it to charge whatever it wants.

Qwest should remain regulated as there is no evidence that there is wide spread, easily available competition nor is there any evidence Qwest would be responsible or consumer friendly in an unregulated environment.

So long as a near monopoly of a basic service exists in the landline telephone industry, the public interest is served by PUC regulation.

In Idaho cell phones are not reliable. Therefore legislation to deregulate would give Qwest the right to charge whatever prices they want without competition.

Consumer perception survey [offered by Qwest in PUC proceeding] is not a good measure of effective competition.

Industry deregulation has not worked to the consumer's advantage in most cases. Cell phone coverage is not adequate in Idaho to provide effective competition to land lines.

Regulation of monopolies is still necessary.

Deregulation only works where there is competition.

A general bias for free market solutions is not appropriate to this question. Qwest is a de facto monopoly and should be regulated accordingly.

Give Priority to Idaho Citizens not Special Interests

The people of the state should be considered as priority over big business. Effective competition has not been shown to exist as of yet.

Please pay more attention to ordinary constituents than to telecom industry lobbyists and deregulation ideology that does not connect to daily lives of many Idahoans.

Tell them their first consideration is to their constituents the public, not for the self serving greed of large public service corporations.

Vote with Idaho citizens, not special interests that contribute to your campaigns.

Come on, think about your constituents for once rather than listening exclusively to big businesses.

Who are you working for? Lobbyists or Idaho citizens?

Stop supporting business needs. Support the needs of regular people. Having a telephone that is affordable and more dependable than cell phones should be a right of all Idaho citizens.

Qwest's arguments for deregulation are based primarily on what would be good for their business. They tend to gloss over the problems it would bring to individuals and small businesses in the state.

Legislators who took money from Qwest should not vote on this issue. They should also look at the evidence the PUC relied on and come to the same conclusion. They hired the PUC as impartial experts and should follow them.

Qwest is another major corporation seeking to have special preferences. It's not of "Idaho" vintage anymore and is not proving itself the most responsible public utility purveyor.

I don't trust Qwest but I think this bill is important in terms of telecommunications growth in Idaho. But I vote no to show the corporations we won't let them run our politics and that Idahoans want their legislators to respond to them and not special interests.

Money talks, doesn't it?

Idaho's Rural & Mountainous Character Make Cell Phones Less Effective Competition Than Elsewhere

Idaho isn't ready for deregulations of land lines because of its rugged geography and rural character.

This is a bad idea for Idaho; especially for rural Idaho.

Before you vote consider those who live in the mountain area's, where cell phone services is very limited. You would have to find hot spots to make phone calls with cell phones.

Qwest does not have competition in rural areas by cell phones. Idaho being a mountainous terrain there are many dead areas where cell phone does not operate. This has been my personal experience.

It is important to consider the needs and limitations of rural residents, particularly our geography and the challenges it presents, when thinking about telecommunications.

Please consider the dozens of small towns in Idaho that depend on their land line phones.

Remember our rural residents and our struggle to access modern communications at a reasonable cost.

This is bad for rural Idahoans in particular.

The deregulation proposal by Qwest will apply unnecessary hardships for rural land line users. There does not appear to be sufficient evidence that rural users have viable alternatives to current landline services.

Cell Phones Not Effective Alternative for Small Businesses

As a small business owner we cannot use a cell phone for our business because we need to fax, we have multiple employees and we couldn't pass around a cell-phone to them.

I'd shut my doors before relying on cell phones to try to run my small business.

Small business phone service is already too expensive and cell phones are not comparable.

It is easier for residential folks to cut their landline and go strictly cellular than it is for business owners. Consideration should be made for those who have to maintain a landline to stay in business.

Cell phones are an option to landlines but they are far more expensive per month. For businesses landlines may be more convenient. I know I spend time every day trying to find my cell phone.

We need more information on small business use of cell phones and land line phones to better determine if competition exists before any legislation is considered.

General Opposition to Proposal

Stay the course.

Defeat it.

It's important that customers have adequate access to telephones - this bill will let Qwest increase prices without due diligence.

Do not pass the deregulation for Quest. We will be sorry if we go to a deregulated status.

Don't do it.

It will not be good for consumers.

Lack of control will let Qwest overcharge whenever possible.

Deny.

I oppose the Qwest legislation.

Cell Phones Don't Serve Same Functions as Landlines

Cell phone service is still not a viable alternative to a landline for most individuals and small businesses. Land lines are required for internet access, faxes, DVR services(tivo), etc.

In my family we have one land line and four cell phones. The cell phones would go before the land line. We use the land line for the internet as well as for long time friends and family members to reach us.

Phone lines are too critical to Idaho communication to disrupt without better competition for internet access. Cell phones are not landline competition for many of us.

When discussing the issue, please consider the ability of residents to pay for phone line, and dialup internet service. This is not currently an affordable service on cell phones.

Qwest Has Not Earned Trust

I do not think the people of Idaho should be forced to pay for the mistakes and errors in judgment made by Qwest's management.

Qwest is looking after their own interests, and when they quote costs to you, be wary of what they say. Their own management is under investigation.

In my view, Qwest has been intransigent in allowing competitors adequate access to telecommunications infrastructure in a way that encourages an open and free market.

Please do not reward Qwest corporate irresponsibility with legislation they desire. Qwest needs to improve its corporate conduct and settle all legal issues and create a positive track record prior to deregulation.

Better to let the PUC Make These Decisions

Let the PUC do its job, the job it is designed to do -- regulating rates.

If the IPUC, which was set up by the legislative and executive branches, opposes such deregulation, why would the legislature chose to override the very body they put in place to control such utilities.

Please support the decision of the PUC as it the appointed body and chosen process in which this issue is suppose to be addressed. Let the system work as created.

Deregulation Hasn't Worked Well in Other States

Qwest has tried the same deregulation scheme in other states. Those that have deregulated saw their rates rise in the years following.

While considering a similar proposal from Qwest, the Oregon PUC determined in 2003 that deregulation had increased prices to those States that deregulated.

Deregulation Generally Doesn't Help Consumers

Do not make a decision in haste. Deregulation (in my opinion) has not helped the consumer.

A review of deregulation in our nation shows that in most cases it has been premature and ill thought out. Consequences should be considered.

General Support for Proposal

Cut off ALL government favor in behalf of Qwest and deregulate the entire system.

This will inevitably make Qwest more competitive as well as any other provider vying for my dollar.

Miscellaneous

I disagree with this proposal because

1. It opens the door for cell phone companies to follow suit and raise prices accordingly.
2. Landlines will always be needed because not all of us are in areas that have good cell phone coverage.

We need to be careful forcing retired or elderly people as well as small business into new technology.

Oppose Qwest dereg unless a sunset clause was added, thus allowing a trial period.

I'm particularly concerned about the effect deregulation would have on the elderly. 1.Cell phones are difficult to use because of their size. 2.Reception is frequently poor which could place the elderly in jeopardy.

While Qwest's track record seems riddled with dishonest business practices (and some states have acted on this), this deregulation issue does not hinge on those facts. The question to address is whether effective competition exists.

The talk of deregulating something that is as essential as you telephone is a very scary proposition. There seems to be a lot of high emotions on this issue and that is why there is so much anecdotal evidence.

If the concern is saving a few dollars a month on phone bills, maybe we need to start looking at the staggering health care costs in comparison.

There needs to be either a cap on how much Qwest can charge, or a way to regulate charges.

Quest has occupied thousands of miles of public right-of-way with no franchise fees attached. I am not advocating franchise fees because they will simply be passed on to the consumer.

There is a national security issue here - cell phones are more vulnerable to surveillance and sabotage. Land lines should be encouraged so that at least some of us are hooked up in a less vulnerable way.

THINK. Make very sure that this proposal is in the best interests of the people of Idaho.

ABOUT THE COMMON INTEREST

The Common Interest is a grassroots, non-partisan, non-profit organization that aims to make government more responsive to the interests of common citizens by:

- Reducing the influence of special interests
- Reducing partisanship

What We Do

As common citizens, we take five concrete steps together to accomplish these goals:

1. Members choose the issues before the state legislature that they feel are the most important to track.
2. The organization develops briefing materials on those issues.
3. Each member is randomly assigned to review the briefing materials for one issue each year and then to complete a questionnaire.
4. If a 60% or greater majority emerges either in favor or opposed to a given proposal, that becomes the official position of the organization. We communicate those positions to the legislature and keep a legislative scorecard.
5. Each member commits to holding elected officials accountable by voting in the primary as well as general elections.

Who We Are

Launched November 19, 2004, there are now over 550 members of The Common Interest. Members are moderates, conservatives, and liberals who come from across Idaho—from Bonners Ferry to Twin Falls and from Rexburg to Parma.

The founder and president is Keith Allred. A fifth-generation Idahoan who grew up in Twin Falls, Keith recently moved back to Idaho after being on the faculty at Columbia and then Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. An expert in mediation and conflict resolution, he currently the Frank Church Professor of Public Policy at BSU.

The founding board members are Laird Noh of Kimberly and Marguerite McLaughlin of Orofino. In November, Laird, a sheep rancher, retired from the Idaho Senate after representing the Magic Valley as a Republican for 24 years. Marguerite retired in 2000 after representing north-central Idaho as a Democrat first in the House for four years and then in the Senate for 18 years. Marguerite and her family run McLaughlin Logging. Both Laird and Marguerite earned sterling reputations for practical, independent thinking that transcended partisan politics.

Join Us

The Common Interest invites Republicans, Democrats, and Independents to join us in our effort to promote government by the people in Idaho. No donation is required. Members simply commit one hour of their time each year to studying out an issue and sharing their views and commit to voting in both the primaries and general elections.

You can learn more and join at: www.TheCommonInterest.org