

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 980**  
**Before the Senate Business and Commerce Committee**  
**On March 15, 2011**  
**By Spencer White Bell**

Chairman Carona, esteemed members of the committee, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to join you here today.

I want to extend my gratitude for your leadership and work on behalf of Texans, our families and our businesses.

My name is Spencer White Bell. I live in Harlingen and work in Weslaco, Texas. I am owner/operator of the Holiday Inn Express in Weslaco and have various investments in the Rio Grande Valley.

I am proud to serve on the Executive Board of the Rio Grande Valley Partnership, the leading voice for business in South Texas.

"Change is Inn" --That has been the buzz phrase around Holiday Inn Express across the state and around the globe over the past two years as we reposition our brand through our global re-launch. That effort has updated our brand and modernized our product through refreshed lobbies, updated rooms, new signage and improved service- all to better meet the needs of business travelers. In my industry, if you don't evolve to meet the needs of your guest you will be left behind.

The same can be said of Telecommunications and Technology.

I hope the Texas Legislature will be equally responsive to the needs of Texas businesses and consumers when it comes to modernizing our state's telecomm and technology laws.

"Change is Inn" and in the case of telecomm and tech, it's happening at light speed. We are here today to discuss Senate Bill 980, less than one week after the iPad2 went on sale. When the Legislature last convened, the iPad didn't exist and yet less than two years after the original product release we are enjoying a far advanced second generation device that has revolutionized the way people work, read, learn, play and communicate.

It is fair to say that technology, along with the way Texans work and communicate, is moving at the speed of light.

In my line of work, I bear witness to emerging technology and the way people communicate on a daily basis. Wireless phone service and high speed Internet are absolutely vital. My customers demand it. We have to provide it or we will be left behind.

I am grateful for the State's efforts to modernize our laws to ensure a light regulatory touch and pave the way for continued investment and infrastructure to help Texans work, learn and connect.

It's that kind of leadership that keeps Texas competitive, our communities connected and investment dollars flowing.

But, we cannot and should not rest, as technology surely doesn't.

I am concerned that relics of a bygone era when phones were big and bulky and there was only "game" in town for communication still exist within our laws.

Ultimately, these dusty old provisions will do our state and its taxpayers a great disservice if left in place, stifling innovation and limiting investment and hampering business and consumer access to the next great iPad-like leap forward.

That is why I believe Senate Bill 980 is so important and should be passed. It will remove provisions that date back to a time when work was paper-intensive, rotary dial phones were king and the thought of mobile smart phones weren't even a glimmer in our eye.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee--Thank you for the opportunity to share my views.

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