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January 20, 2021
House Judiciary Committee
Neutral HB 1144, if amended
Chairman Lawrence Klemin

Dear Chairman Klemin and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of AT&T, I want to help explain the important differences between what AT&T does as an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and social media platforms that are the actual focus of this House Bill 1144.

"Social media platform" means an internet-based service that allows individuals to do all the following:

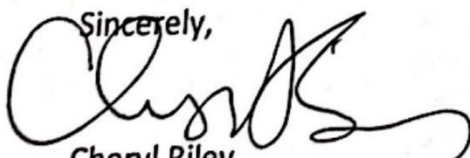
- Construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system created by the service.
- Create a list of other users with whom an individual shares a connection within the system.
- View and navigate a list of the individual's connections and the connections made by other individuals within the system.
- "Social media platform" does not include electronic mail.

Simply put, social media platforms should be defined as websites or internet platforms whose primary purpose is to provide end users the ability to construct a public/semi-public profile and share and generate content and find and connect with other users of common or similar interests. At AT&T, we do not generally operate services that would be considered social media platforms. However, under federal law, specifically section 230 of the Communications Act, all internet service providers, including AT&T, are considered "interactive computer services" so we urge legislators to not re-use that term here and instead narrow the scope of House Bill 1144 to address only those entities targeted by the legislation.

Using the term "interactive computer services" could be easily misapplied and unintentionally impact broadband internet providers, non-social media applications, web hosts and others who are not the intended focus of the legislation.

AT&T will be neutral on HB 1144 if the bill is limited in its focus to "social media platforms" specifically, as opposed to the more general category of "interactive computer services."

Please let me know if we can provide more information on these definitions and help further clarify these terms and important distinctions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Riley
President, AT&T North Dakota