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Proposed Legislation Would Require Mobile Carriers to Provide Better Information to Consumers about “4G”

Legislation pending in the U.S. House of Representatives would require mobile carriers to detail their "guaranteed minimum" data speeds and their network reliability statistics to potential customers. Sponsors of the [New Generation Wireless Disclosure Act](#), such as Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), say that the Act would give mobile customers more information about new 4G services.

As we discussed last year in our article last year, [4G versus 3G: Next Generation or Hoax?](#), to date there is no standard definition of 4G mobile service. What is currently labeled “4G” can provide “vastly different” speeds depending on the carrier and location.

Congresswoman Eshoo believes that, “Consumers deserve to know exactly what they're getting for their money when they sign-up for a 4G data plan. The wireless industry has invested billions to improve service coverage, reliability, and data speeds, and consumers' demand for 4G is expected to explode. But consumers need to know the truth about the speeds they're actually getting.”

If passed, the Act would require mobile carriers to offer customers information on pricing such as caps on “unlimited” plans and would require carriers to disclose what technologies they use to deliver “4G” services along with what type of coverage the plans have in various geographic areas. Moreover, the Act would require the FCC to compare the prices and

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speeds of 4G data service at the 10 largest U.S. mobile carriers and give consumers a side-by-side comparison.

Not surprisingly, the [CTIA](#), which represents the largest mobile carriers is arguing against this bill because it is an added layer of regulation attempting to tackle a complex issue. Alternatively, [consumers groups](#) support the bill arguing that the new legislation will empower consumers by helping them to shop for the best wireless plan for them.

To date, the New Generation Wireless Disclosure Act has been referred to committee. You can track the progress of the New Generation Wireless Disclosure Act [here](#).

If you have questions about this issue, or if we may be of assistance to you, please feel free to contact us.

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