



The Daily Dish

## September 8th Edition

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | SEPTEMBER 8, 2014

Congress is welcomed back to DC this week after the August recess. With a few [must pass bills](#), Roll Call looks for Congress to bring up and pass a continuing resolution to keep agencies operational, reauthorize the Export-Import Bank, and for House Republicans to push a number of energy bills.

The White House has [delayed its decision](#) on amnesty until after November, inviting criticism from liberals and conservatives alike. Speaker Boehner told the media, “There is never a ‘right’ time for the president to declare amnesty by executive action, but the decision to simply delay this deeply-controversial and possibly unconstitutional unilateral action until after the election — instead of abandoning the idea altogether — smacks of raw politics.”

There are new Healthcare.gov worries that Congress will also [have to tackle](#). Included is the recent hack of the website and the capabilities of the site and the government to successfully implement open enrollment in just a three month window this year. Marilyn Tavenner, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services administrator, has already been called in to testify before the House Oversight Committee on the security breach.

### *Eakinomics: Broadband Competition*

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Wheeler recently challenged industry and government “to do everything in our power to ensure that the United States has the world’s most dynamic and competitive broadband ecosystem.” He also asserted that there were insufficient “competitive choices for most Americans...three-quarters of American homes have no competitive choice for the essential infrastructure for 21st century economics and democracy.”

This assessment is at odds with the FCC’s own data that indicated in 2012 that 67 percent of households had a choice of either 2 or 3 wireline providers for 10 megabits per second (Mbps) service (and possibly satellite and other options). Note that Japan, Hong Kong, and Switzerland — top-ranked countries for average speeds — hover around 13 Mbps, on average. Moreover, there has been a near doubling of 10 Mbps connections in the US since the FCC data was collected; from 19.5 percent to nearly 38.4 percent in the first quarter of 2014. And in the past year, the U.S. average connection speed is up 31 percent.

Consumers are benefiting with faster speeds, but there are also many new options ranging from AT&T’s U-Verse service, to Google Fiber, to high-speed services being launched by Cox Communications, C-Spire in Mississippi, and SuddenLink in Arkansas, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, and West Virginia.

As AAF’s Will Rinehart lays out in more [detail](#), the choices and competitive marketplace in broadband look robust. The Chairman’s challenge is already being met.

### *From the Forum*

[Week in Regulation](#) by Sam Batkins, AAF Director of Regulatory Policy

[Taking Chairman Wheeler's Broadband Competition Challenge Seriously](#) by Will Rinehart, AAF Director of Technology and Innovation Policy