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Washington, D.C. -- Rep. Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, criticized today's determination by the U.S. Solicitor General not to seek an appeal of the March 2nd decision by the D.C. Court of Appeals which vacated FCC rules permitting competitive access to the nation's local phone networks:

"Today's decision by the Solicitor General strikes a blow to the emerging competition in local telephone service," Eshoo said. "The 1996 Telecommunications Act sought to ensure access to the local facilities of the dominant local carriers so that consumers could benefit from the innovation and choice that competition provides. Unless the Court of Appeals' decision is overturned, the '96 Act will really have been futile."

The FCC rules at issue provide competitive telephone companies access to the local networks of incumbent carriers, primarily the four regional Bell companies. This allowed new entrants into the local telephone market and enabled competitors to bundle additional services such as DSL or long distance service with local phone services in a single competitive offering.

"As a member of the House Telecommunications Subcommittee, I will work to reverse the ill-advised and damaging decision of the D.C. Circuit," Eshoo said.

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