

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Finance to which was referred J.R.H.1 entitled
3 “Joint resolution expressing support for the Public Service Board’s
4 establishment of a FairPoint Communications service investigation docket and
5 urging the management of FairPoint Communications to settle the current
6 employee strike in order to restore reliable telecommunications services in
7 Vermont” has considered the same and recommends that the Senate propose to
8 the House that the resolution be amended as follows:

9 ~~Joint resolution expressing support for the Public Service Board’s~~
10 ~~establishment of a FairPoint Communications service investigation docket and~~
11 ~~urging the management of FairPoint Communications to settle the current~~
12 ~~employee strike in order to restore reliable telecommunications services in~~
13 ~~Vermont~~

14 Joint resolution expressing support for the Public Service Board’s
15 establishment of a FairPoint Communications service investigation docket and
16 urging the settlement of the current employee strike in order to restore
17 telecommunications services in Vermont

18 Whereas, since 2008, FairPoint Communications (FairPoint) has been
19 Vermont’s primary provider of landline telecommunications services, and

1 Whereas, although FairPoint promised to add hundreds of new jobs in the
2 three northern New England states, the company’s post-2009 bankruptcy
3 workforce is now 20 percent smaller than in 2008, and

4 Whereas, in August 2014, FairPoint made what the company described as
5 its last offer to its unionized employees for a new contract, and

6 Whereas, the proposal would have resulted in reduced benefits, but the
7 unionized employees remained at work for two months and offered FairPoint
8 \$200 million in concessions, and

9 Whereas, after their best efforts and much frustration, in October 2014 the
10 employees’ two unions, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
11 Local 2326 and Communications Workers of America Local 1400, authorized
12 a strike against FairPoint, and

13 Whereas, since the strike started, consumer complaints have risen
14 approximately 500 percent, resulting in much personal and commercial
15 inconvenience, and

16 Whereas, on November 28, 2014, the State’s E-911 system missed 83 calls
17 in part due to FairPoint’s operational problems, and

18 Whereas, at the request of the Department of Public Service, the Public
19 Service Board, on December 9, 2014, established Docket 8390 to investigate
20 the service problems FairPoint has encountered, and

1 Whereas, Governor Peter Shumlin, the congressional delegation, and the
2 leadership of the General Assembly’s Working Vermonters Caucus have
3 written letters to FairPoint’s CEO Paul Sunu calling on FairPoint to return in
4 good faith to the negotiating table, and the Caucus’ letter indicated that failure
5 to reach a fair and timely settlement would result in General Assembly
6 members’ examination of FairPoint’s “financial strength and managerial
7 competence to properly serve the people of Vermont,” and

8 Whereas, on January 4, 2015, in Washington, D.C., the Federal Mediation
9 and Conciliation Service convened a meeting between the parties at which the
10 Service assumed a more proactive role than in a prior session, now
11 therefore be it

12 Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

13 ~~That the General Assembly expresses support for the Public Service~~
14 ~~Board’s establishment of a FairPoint Communications service investigation~~
15 ~~docket and urges the management of FairPoint Communications to settle the~~
16 ~~current employee strike in order to restore reliable telecommunications~~
17 ~~services in Vermont, and be it further~~

18 Resolved: ~~That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this~~
19 ~~resolution to FairPoint Communications CEO Paul Sunu, FairPoint Vermont~~
20 ~~President Beth Fastiggi, Governor Peter Shumlin, the Public Service~~
21 ~~Department, and the Public Service Board.~~

1 That the General Assembly expresses support for the Public Service
2 Board’s establishment of a FairPoint Communications service investigation
3 docket and urges the settlement of the current employee strike in order to
4 restore reliable telecommunications services in Vermont, and be it further
5 Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this
6 resolution to FairPoint Communications CEO Paul Sunu, FairPoint Vermont
7 President Beth Fastiggi, Governor Peter Shumlin, the Public Service
8 Department, the Public Service Board, the International Brotherhood of
9 Electrical Workers Local 2326, and the Communications Workers of America
10 Local 1400.