



Standing Committee Report Summary

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2008

- The Standing Committee on Information Technology presented its 68th report on the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2008 on February 16, 2009. The Chairperson of the Committee is Shri Nikhil Kumar.
- The Bill amends The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Act 1997 which creates a statutory body to regulate the telecom industry.
- The Act states that the Chairperson and other members shall be appointed by the central government among persons with knowledge of telecommunications, industry, finance, law etc. It adds that a person who is or has been in the service of government may be appointed only if he has held the post of secretary or additional secretary for at least three years. The Bill restricts this requirement to those persons who are currently in government service or left the service through superannuation. Former government employees who left the service before superannuation need not meet this condition,
- While the amendment is attempting to remove anomalies and inconsistencies, the Committee believes the language is not clear and will lead to more ambiguity and litigation.
- They urge the government to make the qualifications for posts to TRAI uniform by removing the restrictive nature of the clause so that “deserving persons from within government are considered for the posts at par with the best in the open market.” The government should offer a ‘level playing field’ to all so that the Authority can regulate effectively.
- The Committee urges the government to clearly articulate the different qualifications for chairperson instead of relying on an opinion from the Ministry of Law and Justice.

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