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AGREEMENT AND PLAN OF MERGER (this "Agreement") dated as of April 21, 2010, among QWEST COMMUNICATIONS INTERNATIONAL INC., a Delaware corporation ("Qwest"), CENTURYTEL, INC., a Louisiana corporation ("CenturyLink"), and SB44 Acquisition Company, a Delaware corporation and a wholly owned subsidiary of CenturyLink ("Merger Sub").

WHEREAS the Board of Directors of Qwest, the Board of Directors of CenturyLink, and the Board of Directors of Merger Sub have approved this Agreement, determined that the terms of this Agreement are in the best interests of Qwest, CenturyLink or Merger Sub, as applicable, and their respective stockholders or shareholders, as applicable, and declared the advisability of this Agreement;

WHEREAS the Board of Directors of Qwest and the Board of Directors of Merger Sub have recommended adoption or approval, as applicable, of this Agreement by their respective stockholders, as applicable;

WHEREAS for U.S. Federal income Tax purposes, the Merger is intended to qualify as a "reorganization" within the meaning of Section 368(a) of the Code (the "Intended Tax Treatment"), and this Agreement is intended to be, and is adopted as, a "plan of reorganization" for purposes of Sections 354, 361 and 368 of the Code; and

WHEREAS Qwest, CenturyLink and Merger Sub desire to make certain representations, warranties, covenants and agreements in connection with the Merger and also to prescribe various conditions to the Merger.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing and the representations, warranties and covenants herein and intending to be legally bound, the parties hereto agree as follows:

ARTICLE I

The Merger

Section 1.01. The Merger. On the terms and subject to the conditions set forth in this Agreement, and in accordance with the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware (the "DGCL"), on the Closing Date, Merger Sub shall be merged with and into Qwest (the "Merger"). At the Effective Time, the separate corporate existence of Merger Sub shall cease and Qwest shall continue as the surviving company in the Merger (the "Surviving Company").

Section 1.02. Closing. The closing (the "Closing") of the Merger shall take place at the offices of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz, 51 West 52nd Street, New York, New York 10019 at 10:00 a.m., New York City time, on a date to be specified by Qwest and CenturyLink, which shall be no later than the tenth Business Day following the satisfaction or (to the extent permitted by Law) waiver by the party or parties entitled to the benefits thereof of the conditions set forth in Article VII (other than those conditions that by their nature are to be satisfied at the Closing, but subject to the satisfaction or (to the extent permitted by Law) waiver of those conditions), or at such other place, time and date as shall be agreed in writing between Qwest and CenturyLink; provided, however, that if all the conditions set forth in Article VII shall not have been satisfied or (to the extent permitted by Law) waived on such tenth Business Day, then the Closing shall take place on the tenth Business Day on which all such conditions shall have been satisfied or (to the extent permitted by Law) waived, or at such other place, time and date as shall be agreed in writing between Qwest and CenturyLink. The date on which the Closing occurs is referred to in this Agreement as the "Closing Date."

Section 1.03. Effective Time. Subject to the provisions of this Agreement, as soon as practicable on the Closing Date, the parties shall file with the Secretary of State of the State of Delaware the certificate of merger relating to the Merger (the "Certificate of Merger"), executed and acknowledged in accordance with the relevant provisions of the DGCL, and, as soon as practicable on or after the Closing Date, shall make all other filings required under the DGCL or by the Secretary of State of the State of Delaware in connection with the Merger. The Merger shall become effective at the time that the Certificate of Merger has been duly filed with the Secretary of State of the State of Delaware, or at such later time as Qwest and CenturyLink

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shall agree and specify in the Certificate of Merger (the time the Merger becomes effective being the "Effective Time").

Section 1.04. Effects. The Merger shall have the effects set forth in this Agreement and Section 259 of the DGCL.

Section 1.05. Certificate of Incorporation and By-Laws. The certificate of incorporation of Merger Sub, as in effect immediately prior to the Effective Time, shall be the certificate of incorporation of the Surviving Company until thereafter changed or amended as provided therein or by applicable Law, except that the name of the Surviving Company shall be QWEST COMMUNICATIONS INTERNATIONAL INC. The by-laws of Merger Sub, as in effect immediately prior to the Effective Time, shall be the by-laws of the Surviving Company until thereafter changed or amended as provided therein or by applicable Law, except that references to the name of Merger Sub shall be replaced by references to the name of the Surviving Company.

Section 1.06. Directors and Officers of Surviving Company. The directors of Merger Sub immediately prior to the Effective Time shall be the directors of the Surviving Company until the earlier of their resignation or removal or until their respective successors are duly elected and qualified, as the case may be. The officers of Qwest immediately prior to the Effective Time shall be the officers of the Surviving Company until the earlier of their resignation or removal or until their respective successors are duly elected or appointed and qualified, as the case may be.

ARTICLE II

Effect on the Capital Stock of the Constituent Entities: Exchange of Certificates

Section 2.01. Effect on Capital Stock. At the Effective Time, by virtue of the Merger and without any action on the part of Qwest, CenturyLink, Merger Sub or the holder of any shares of Qwest Common Stock or Merger Sub Common Stock:

(i) Conversion of Merger Sub Common Stock. Each share of common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, in Merger Sub (the "Merger Sub Common Stock") issued and outstanding immediately prior to the Effective Time shall be converted into 1 fully paid and nonassessable share of common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, of the Surviving Company with the same rights, powers and privileges as the shares so converted and shall constitute the only outstanding shares of capital stock of the Surviving Company. From and after the Effective Time, all certificates representing shares of Merger Sub Common Stock shall be deemed for all purposes to represent the number of shares of common stock of the Surviving Company into which they were converted in accordance with the immediately preceding sentence.

(ii) Cancellation of Treasury Stock and CenturyLink-Owned Stock. Each share of common stock, par value \$0.01, of Qwest (the "Qwest Common Stock") that is owned by Qwest as treasury stock and each share of Qwest Common Stock that is owned by CenturyLink or Merger Sub immediately prior to the Effective Time shall no longer be outstanding and shall automatically be canceled and shall cease to exist, and no consideration shall be delivered in exchange therefor.

(iii) Conversion of Qwest Common Stock. Subject to Section 2.02, each share of Qwest Common Stock issued and outstanding immediately prior to the Effective Time (other than shares to be canceled in accordance with Section 2.01(ii)) shall be converted into the right to receive 0.1664 of a fully paid and nonassessable share (the "Exchange Ratio") of CenturyLink Common Stock (the "Merger Consideration"). All such shares of Qwest Common Stock, when so converted, shall no longer be outstanding and shall automatically be canceled and shall cease to exist, and each holder of a certificate (or evidence of shares in book-entry form) that immediately prior to the Effective Time represented any such shares of Qwest Common Stock (each, a "Certificate") shall cease to have any rights with respect thereto, except the right to receive the Merger Consideration and any cash in lieu of fractional shares of CenturyLink Common Stock to be issued or paid in consideration therefor and any dividends or other distributions to which holders become entitled upon the surrender of such Certificate in accordance with Section 2.02, without interest. For purposes of this Agreement, "CenturyLink Common Stock" means the common

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stock, par value \$1.00 per share, of CenturyLink. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if between the date of this Agreement and the Effective Time the outstanding shares of CenturyLink Common Stock or Qwest Common Stock shall have been changed into a different number of shares or a different class, by reason of any stock dividend, subdivision, reclassification, recapitalization, split, combination or exchange of shares, or any similar event shall have occurred, then any number or amount contained herein which is based upon the number of shares of CenturyLink Common Stock or Qwest Common Stock, as the case may be, will be appropriately adjusted to provide to CenturyLink and the holders of Qwest Common Stock the same economic effect as contemplated by this Agreement prior to such event. As provided in Section 2.02(j), the right of any holder of a Certificate to receive the Merger Consideration shall be subject to and reduced by the amount of any withholding under applicable Tax Law.

Section 2.02. Exchange of Certificates. (a) Exchange Agent. Prior to the Effective Time, CenturyLink shall appoint a bank or trust company reasonably acceptable to Qwest to act as exchange agent (the "Exchange Agent") for the payment of the Merger Consideration. At or prior to the Effective Time, CenturyLink shall deposit with the Exchange Agent, for the benefit of the holders of Certificates, for exchange in accordance with this Article II through the Exchange Agent, certificates representing the shares of CenturyLink Common Stock to be issued as Merger Consideration and cash sufficient to make payments in lieu of fractional shares pursuant to Section 2.02(f). All such CenturyLink Common Stock and cash deposited with the Exchange Agent is hereinafter referred to as the "Exchange Fund."

(b) Letter of Transmittal. As promptly as reasonably practicable after the Effective Time, CenturyLink shall cause the Exchange Agent to mail to each holder of record of Qwest Common Stock a form of letter of transmittal (the "Letter of Transmittal") (which shall specify that delivery shall be effected, and risk of loss and title to the Certificates shall pass, only upon delivery of the Certificates to the Exchange Agent and shall be in such form and have such other provisions (including customary provisions with respect to delivery of an "agent's message" with respect to shares held in book entry form) as CenturyLink may specify subject to Qwest's reasonable approval), together with instructions thereto.

(c) Merger Consideration Received in Connection with Exchange. Upon (i) in the case of shares of Qwest Common Stock represented by a Certificate, the surrender of such Certificate for cancellation to the Exchange Agent, or (ii) in the case of shares of Qwest Common Stock held in book-entry form, the receipt of an "agent's message" by the Exchange Agent, in each case together with the Letter of Transmittal, duly, completely and validly executed in accordance with the instructions thereto, and such other documents as may reasonably be required by the Exchange Agent, the holder of such shares shall be entitled to receive in exchange therefor (i) the Merger Consideration into which such shares of Qwest Common Stock have been converted pursuant to Section 2.01 and (ii) any cash in lieu of fractional shares which the holder has the right to receive pursuant to Section 2.02(f) and in respect of any dividends or other distributions which the holder has the right to receive pursuant to Section 2.02(d). In the event of a transfer of ownership of Qwest Common Stock which is not registered in the transfer records of Qwest, a certificate representing the proper number of shares of CenturyLink Common Stock pursuant to Section 2.01 and cash in lieu of fractional shares which the holder has the right to receive pursuant to Section 2.02(f) and in respect of any dividends or other distributions which the holder has the right to receive pursuant to Section 2.02(d) may be issued to a transferee if the Certificate representing such Qwest Common Stock (or, if such Qwest Common Stock is held in book entry form, proper evidence of such transfer) is presented to the Exchange Agent, accompanied by all documents required to evidence and effect such transfer and by evidence that any applicable stock transfer Taxes have been paid. Until surrendered as contemplated by this Section 2.02(c), each share of Qwest Common Stock, and any Certificate with respect thereto, shall be deemed at any time from and after the Effective Time to represent only the right to receive upon such surrender the Merger Consideration which the holders of shares of Qwest Common Stock were entitled to receive in respect of such shares pursuant to Section 2.01 (and cash in lieu of fractional shares pursuant to Section 2.02(f) and in respect of any dividends or other distributions pursuant to Section 2.02(d)). No interest shall be paid or shall accrue on the cash payable upon surrender of any Certificate (or shares of Qwest Common Stock held in book-entry form).

(d) Treatment of Unexchanged Shares. No dividends or other distributions declared or made with respect to CenturyLink Common Stock with a record date after the Effective Time shall be paid to the holder

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of any unsurrendered Certificate (or shares of Qwest Common Stock held in book-entry form) with respect to the shares of CenturyLink Common Stock issuable upon surrender thereof, and no cash payment in lieu of fractional shares shall be paid to any such holder pursuant to Section 2.02(f), until the surrender of such Certificate (or shares of Qwest Common Stock held in book-entry form) in accordance with this Article II. Subject to escheat, Tax or other applicable Law, following surrender of any such Certificate (or shares of Qwest Common Stock held in book-entry form), there shall be paid to the holder of the certificate representing whole shares of CenturyLink Common Stock issued in exchange therefor, without interest, (i) at the time of such surrender, the amount of any cash payable in lieu of a fractional share of CenturyLink Common Stock to which such holder is entitled pursuant to Section 2.02(f) and the amount of dividends or other distributions with a record date after the Effective Time theretofore paid with respect to such whole shares of CenturyLink Common Stock and (ii) at the appropriate payment date, the amount of dividends or other distributions with a record date after the Effective Time but prior to such surrender and a payment date subsequent to such surrender payable with respect to such whole shares of CenturyLink Common Stock.

(c) No Further Ownership Rights in Qwest Common Stock. The shares of CenturyLink Common Stock issued and cash paid in accordance with the terms of this Article II upon conversion of any shares of Qwest Common Stock (including any cash paid pursuant to subsection (f) of this Section 2.02) shall be deemed to have been issued and paid in full satisfaction of all rights pertaining to such shares of Qwest Common Stock. From and after the Effective Time, there shall be no further registration of transfers on the stock transfer books of the Surviving Company of shares of Qwest Common Stock that were outstanding immediately prior to the Effective Time. If, after the Effective Time, any Certificates formerly representing shares of Qwest Common Stock (or shares of Qwest Common Stock held in book-entry form) are presented to CenturyLink or the Exchange Agent for any reason, they shall be canceled and exchanged as provided in this Article II.

(f) No Fractional Shares. No certificates or scrip representing fractional shares of CenturyLink Common Stock shall be issued upon the conversion of Qwest Common Stock pursuant to Section 2.01. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, each holder of shares of Qwest Common Stock converted pursuant to the Merger who would otherwise have been entitled to receive a fraction of a share of CenturyLink Common Stock (after taking into account all shares of Qwest Common Stock exchanged by such holder) shall receive, in lieu thereof, cash (without interest) in an amount equal to such fractional amount multiplied by the last reported sale price of CenturyLink Common Stock on the New York Stock Exchange (the "NYSE") (as reported in The Wall Street Journal or, if not reported therein, in another authoritative source mutually selected by CenturyLink and Qwest) on the last complete trading day prior to the date of the Effective Time (the "CenturyLink Closing Price").

(g) Termination of Exchange Fund. Any portion of the Exchange Fund (including any interest received with respect thereto) that remains undistributed to the holders of Qwest Common Stock for 180 days after the Effective Time shall be delivered to CenturyLink and any holder of Qwest Common Stock who has not theretofore complied with this Article II shall thereafter look only to CenturyLink for payment of its claim for Merger Consideration, any cash in lieu of fractional shares and any dividends and distributions to which such holder is entitled pursuant to this Article II, in each case without any interest thereon.

(h) No Liability. None of Qwest, CenturyLink, Merger Sub or the Exchange Agent shall be liable to any Person in respect of any portion of the Exchange Fund delivered to a public official pursuant to any applicable abandoned property, escheat or similar Law. Any portion of the Exchange Fund which remains undistributed to the holders of Certificates for two years after the Effective Time (or immediately prior to such earlier date on which the Exchange Fund would otherwise escheat to, or become the property of, any Governmental Entity), shall, to the extent permitted by applicable Law, become the property of CenturyLink, free and clear of all claims or interest of any Person previously entitled thereto.

(i) Investment of Exchange Fund. The Exchange Agent shall invest any cash in the Exchange Fund as directed by CenturyLink. Any interest and other income resulting from such investments shall be paid to CenturyLink.

(j) Withholding Rights. Each of CenturyLink and the Exchange Agent (without duplication) shall be entitled to deduct and withhold from the consideration otherwise payable to any holder of Qwest Common

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Stock pursuant to this Agreement such amounts as may be required to be deducted and withheld with respect to the making of such payment under applicable Tax Law. Amounts so withheld and paid over to the appropriate taxing authority shall be treated for all purposes of this Agreement as having been paid to the holder of Qwest Common Stock in respect of which such deduction or withholding was made.

(k) Lost Certificates. If any Certificate shall have been lost, stolen or destroyed, upon the making of an affidavit of that fact by the Person claiming such Certificate to be lost, stolen or destroyed and, if required by CenturyLink, the posting by such Person of a bond, in such reasonable and customary amount as CenturyLink may direct, as indemnity against any claim that may be made against it with respect to such Certificate, the Exchange Agent shall issue, in exchange for such lost, stolen or destroyed Certificate, the Merger Consideration, any cash in lieu of fractional shares and any dividends and distributions on the Certificate deliverable in respect thereof pursuant to this Agreement.

ARTICLE III

Representations and Warranties of CenturyLink and Merger Sub

CenturyLink and Merger Sub jointly and severally represent and warrant to Qwest that the statements contained in this Article III are true and correct except as set forth in the CenturyLink SEC Documents filed and publicly available after January 1, 2010 and prior to the date of this Agreement (the "Filed CenturyLink SEC Documents") (excluding any disclosures in the Filed CenturyLink SEC Documents in any risk factors section, in any section related to forward looking statements and other disclosures that are predictive or forward-looking in nature) or in the disclosure letter delivered by CenturyLink to Qwest at or before the execution and delivery by CenturyLink and Merger Sub of this Agreement (the "CenturyLink Disclosure Letter"). The CenturyLink Disclosure Letter shall be arranged in numbered and lettered sections corresponding to the numbered and lettered sections contained in this Article III, and the disclosure in any section shall be deemed to qualify other sections in this Article III to the extent (and only to the extent) that it is reasonably apparent from the face of such disclosure that such disclosure also qualifies or applies to such other sections.

Section 3.01. Organization, Standing and Power. Each of CenturyLink and each of CenturyLink's Subsidiaries (the "CenturyLink Subsidiaries") is duly organized, validly existing and in good standing under the laws of the jurisdiction in which it is organized (in the case of good standing, to the extent such jurisdiction recognizes such concept), except, in the case of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries, where the failure to be so organized, existing or in good standing, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. Each of CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries has all requisite power and authority and possesses all governmental franchises, licenses, permits, authorizations, variances, exemptions, orders and approvals (collectively, "Permits") necessary to enable it to own, lease or otherwise hold its properties and assets and to conduct its businesses as presently conducted (the "CenturyLink Permits"), except where the failure to have such power or authority or to possess CenturyLink Permits, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. Each of CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is duly qualified or licensed to do business in each jurisdiction where the nature of its business or the ownership or leasing of its properties make such qualification necessary, other than in such jurisdictions where the failure to be so qualified or licensed, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. CenturyLink has delivered or made available to Qwest, prior to execution of this Agreement, true and complete copies of (a) the amended and restated articles of incorporation of CenturyLink in effect as of the date of this Agreement (the "CenturyLink Articles") and the by-laws of CenturyLink in effect as of the date of this Agreement (the "CenturyLink By-laws") and (b) the constituent documents of Merger Sub.

Section 3.02. CenturyLink Subsidiaries. (a) All the outstanding shares of capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, each CenturyLink Subsidiary have been validly issued and are fully paid and nonassessable and are owned by CenturyLink, by another CenturyLink Subsidiary or by CenturyLink and another CenturyLink Subsidiary, free and clear of all material pledges, liens, charges, mortgages, deeds of trust, rights of first offer or first refusal, options, encumbrances and security interests of any kind or nature

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whosoever (collectively, with covenants, conditions, restrictions, easements, encroachments, title retention agreements or other third party rights or title defect of any kind or nature whatsoever, "Liens"), and free of any other restriction (including any restriction on the right to vote, sell or otherwise dispose of such capital stock, voting securities or other equity interests), except for restrictions imposed by applicable securities laws. Section 3.02(a) of the CenturyLink Disclosure Letter sets forth, as of the date of this Agreement, a true and complete list of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries.

(b) Except for the capital stock and voting securities of, and other equity interest in, the CenturyLink Subsidiaries, neither CenturyLink nor any CenturyLink Subsidiary owns, directly or indirectly, any capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, or any interest convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for, any capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, any firm, corporation, partnership, company, limited liability company, trust, joint venture, association or other entity.

Section 3.03. Capital Structure. (a) The authorized capital stock of CenturyLink consists of 800,000,000 shares of CenturyLink Common Stock and 2,000,000 shares of preferred stock, par value \$25.00 per share (the "CenturyLink Preferred Stock" and, together with the CenturyLink Common Stock, the "CenturyLink Capital Stock"), of which 325,000 shares have been designated as 5% Cumulative Convertible Series L Preferred Stock (the "CenturyLink Series L Shares"). At the close of business on April 20, 2010, (i) 300,326,469 shares of CenturyLink Common Stock were issued and outstanding, of which 1,278,247 were CenturyLink Restricted Shares, (ii) 9,434 shares of CenturyLink Series L Shares were issued and outstanding, (iii) no shares of CenturyLink Common Stock were held by CenturyLink in its treasury, (iv) 30,760,143 shares of CenturyLink Common Stock were reserved and available for issuance pursuant to the CenturyLink Stock Plans, of which 8,398,143 shares were issuable upon exercise of outstanding CenturyLink Stock Options, (v) 1,001,791 shares of CenturyLink Common Stock were reserved for issuance upon the vesting of CenturyLink RSUs, (vi) 12,864 shares of CenturyLink Common Stock were reserved for issuance upon conversion of the CenturyLink Series L Shares, (vii) 4,115,411 shares of CenturyLink Common Stock were reserved for issuance pursuant to the CenturyLink 2001 Employee Stock Purchase Plan (the "CenturyLink ESPP"), and (viii) 705,133 shares of CenturyLink Common Stock were reserved for issuance pursuant to the CenturyLink Automatic Dividend Reinvestment and Stock Repurchase Service (the "CenturyLink DRIP"). Except as set forth in this Section 3.03(a), at the close of business on April 20, 2010, no shares of capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, CenturyLink were issued, reserved for issuance or outstanding. From the close of business on April 20, 2010 to the date of this Agreement, there have been no issuances by CenturyLink of shares of capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, CenturyLink other than the issuance of CenturyLink Common Stock upon the exercise of CenturyLink Stock Options outstanding at the close of business on April 20, 2010, and issuances pursuant to rights under the CenturyLink ESPP and CenturyLink DRIP, in each case in accordance with their terms in effect as of April 20, 2010.

(b) All outstanding shares of CenturyLink Capital Stock are, and, at the time of issuance, all such shares that may be issued upon the exercise or vesting of CenturyLink Stock Options or CenturyLink RSUs or pursuant to the CenturyLink Stock Plans, the CenturyLink ESPP or the CenturyLink DRIP will be, duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and nonassessable and not subject to, or issued in violation of, any purchase option, call option, right of first refusal, preemptive right, subscription right or any similar right under any provision of the Louisiana Business Corporation Law (the "LBCL"), the CenturyLink Articles, the CenturyLink By-laws or any Contract to which CenturyLink is a party or otherwise bound. The shares of CenturyLink Common Stock constituting the Merger Consideration will be, when issued, duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and nonassessable and not subject to, or issued in violation of, any purchase option, call option, right of first refusal, preemptive right, subscription right or any similar right under any provision of the LBCL, the CenturyLink Articles, the CenturyLink By-laws or any Contract to which CenturyLink is a party or otherwise bound. Except as set forth above in this Section 3.03 or pursuant to the terms of this Agreement, there are not issued, reserved for issuance or outstanding, and there are not any outstanding obligations of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary to issue, deliver or sell, or cause to be issued, delivered or sold, (x) any capital stock of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary or any securities of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for shares of

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capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary, (y) any warrants, calls, options or other rights to acquire from CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary, or any other obligation of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary to issue, deliver or sell, or cause to be issued, delivered or sold, any capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary, or (z) any rights issued by or other obligations of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary that are linked in any way to the price of any class of CenturyLink Capital Stock or any shares of capital stock of any CenturyLink Subsidiary, the value of CenturyLink, any CenturyLink Subsidiary or any part of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary or any dividends or other distributions declared or paid on any shares of capital stock of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary. Except for acquisitions, or deemed acquisitions, of CenturyLink Common Stock or other equity securities of CenturyLink in connection with (i) the payment of the exercise price of CenturyLink Stock Options with CenturyLink Common Stock (including but not limited to in connection with "net exercises"), (ii) required tax withholding in connection with the exercise of CenturyLink Stock Options, the vesting of CenturyLink Restricted Shares or CenturyLink RSUs and the vesting or delivery of other awards pursuant to the CenturyLink Stock Plans and (iii) forfeitures of CenturyLink Stock Options, CenturyLink Restricted Shares and CenturyLink RSUs, there are not any outstanding obligations of CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries to repurchase, redeem or otherwise acquire any shares of capital stock or voting securities or other equity interests of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary or any securities, interests, warrants, calls, options or other rights referred to in clause (x), (y) or (z) of the immediately preceding sentence. With respect to CenturyLink Stock Options, (i) each grant of a CenturyLink Stock Option was duly authorized no later than the date on which the grant of such CenturyLink Stock Option was by its terms to be effective (the "Grant Date") by all necessary corporate action, including, as applicable, approval by the CenturyLink Board (or a duly constituted and authorized committee thereof or subcommittee thereof), and (ii) the per share exercise price of each CenturyLink Stock Option was at least equal to the fair market value of a share of CenturyLink Common Stock on the applicable Grant Date. There are no bonds, debentures, notes or other indebtedness of CenturyLink having the right to vote (or convertible into, or exchangeable for, securities having the right to vote) on any matters on which shareholders of CenturyLink may vote ("CenturyLink Voting Debt"). Neither CenturyLink nor any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is a party to any voting agreement with respect to the voting of any capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, CenturyLink. Except for this Agreement, neither CenturyLink nor any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is a party to any agreement pursuant to which any Person is entitled to elect, designate or nominate any director of CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries.

Section 3.04. Authority: Execution and Delivery: Enforceability. (a) Each of CenturyLink and Merger Sub has all requisite corporate power and authority to execute and deliver this Agreement, to perform its obligations hereunder and thereunder and to consummate the Merger and the other transactions contemplated by this Agreement, subject, in the case of the Share Issuance, to the receipt of the CenturyLink Shareholder Approval and, in the case of the Merger, for the approval of this Agreement by CenturyLink as the sole stockholder of Merger Sub. The Board of Directors of CenturyLink (the "CenturyLink Board") has adopted resolutions, by unanimous vote at a meeting duly called at which a quorum of directors of CenturyLink was present, (i) approving the execution, delivery and performance of this Agreement, (ii) determining that entering into this Agreement is in the best interests of CenturyLink and its shareholders, (iii) recommending that CenturyLink's shareholders vote in favor of approval of the issuance of CenturyLink Common Stock constituting the Merger Consideration (the "Share Issuance") and directing that the Share Issuance be submitted to CenturyLink's shareholders for approval at a duly held meeting of such shareholders for such purpose (the "CenturyLink Shareholders Meeting"). As of the date of this Agreement, such resolutions have not been amended or withdrawn. The Board of Directors of Merger Sub has adopted resolutions (i) approving the execution, delivery and performance of this Agreement, (ii) determining that the terms of this Agreement are in the best interests of Merger Sub and CenturyLink, as its sole stockholder, (iii) declaring this Agreement advisable and (iv) recommending that CenturyLink, as sole stockholder of Merger Sub, adopt this Agreement and directing that this Agreement be submitted to CenturyLink, as sole stockholder of Merger Sub, for adoption. As of the date of this Agreement, such resolutions have not been amended or withdrawn. CenturyLink, as sole stockholder of Merger Sub, will, immediately following the execution and delivery of

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this Agreement by each of the parties hereto, adopt this Agreement. Except (x) solely in the case of the Share Issuance, for the approval of the Share Issuance by the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the voting power of the shares of CenturyLink Common Stock and CenturyLink Preferred Stock represented in person or by proxy at the CenturyLink Shareholders Meeting, as required by Section 312.03(c) of the NYSE Listed Company Manual (the "CenturyLink Shareholder Approval"), and (y) solely in the case of the Merger, for the adoption of this Agreement by CenturyLink as the sole stockholder of Merger Sub, no other corporate proceedings on the part of CenturyLink or Merger Sub are necessary to authorize, adopt or approve, as applicable, this Agreement or to consummate the Merger and the other transactions contemplated by this Agreement (except for the filing of the appropriate merger documents as required by the DGCL). Each of CenturyLink and Merger Sub has duly executed and delivered this Agreement and, assuming the due authorization, execution and delivery by Qwest, this Agreement constitutes its legal, valid and binding obligation, enforceable against it in accordance with its terms except, in each case, as enforcement may be limited by bankruptcy, insolvency, reorganization or similar Laws affecting creditors' rights generally and by general principles of equity.

(b) The CenturyLink By-laws render LBCL Sections 12:135 through 12:140.2 inapplicable to the Merger. No "fair price", "moratorium", "control share acquisition" or other similar antitakeover statute or similar statute or regulation applies with respect to this Agreement, the Merger or any of the other transactions contemplated by this Agreement.

Section 3.05. No Conflicts; Consents. (a) The execution and delivery by each of CenturyLink and Merger Sub of this Agreement does not, and the performance by each of CenturyLink and Merger Sub of its obligations hereunder and the consummation of the Merger and the other transactions contemplated by this Agreement will not, conflict with, or result in any violation of or default (with or without notice or lapse of time, or both) under, or give rise to a right of termination, cancellation or acceleration of any obligation, any obligation to make an offer to purchase or redeem any Indebtedness or capital stock or any loss of a material benefit under, or result in the creation of any Lien upon any of the properties or assets of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary under, any provision of (i) the CenturyLink Articles, the CenturyLink By-laws or the comparable charter or organizational documents of any CenturyLink Subsidiary (assuming that the CenturyLink Shareholder Approval is obtained), (ii) any contract, lease, license, indenture, note, bond, agreement, concession, franchise or other instrument (a "Contract") to which CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary is a party or by which any of their respective properties or assets is bound or any CenturyLink Permit or (iii) subject to the filings and other matters referred to in Section 3.05(b), any judgment, order or decree ("Judgment") or statute, law (including common law), ordinance, rule or regulation ("Law"), in each case, applicable to CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary or their respective properties or assets (assuming that the CenturyLink Shareholder Approval is obtained), other than, in the case of clauses (ii) and (iii) above, any matters that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect (it being agreed that for purposes of this Section 3.05(a), effects resulting from or arising in connection with the matters set forth in clause (iv) of the definition of the term "Material Adverse Effect" shall not be excluded in determining whether a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect has occurred or would reasonably be expected to occur) and would not prevent or materially impede, interfere with, hinder or delay the consummation of the Merger.

(b) No consent, approval, clearance, waiver, Permit or order ("Consent") of or from, or registration, declaration, notice or filing made to or with any Federal, national, state, provincial or local, whether domestic or foreign, government or any court of competent jurisdiction, administrative agency or commission or other governmental authority or instrumentality, whether domestic, foreign or supranational (a "Governmental Entity"), is required to be obtained or made by or with respect to CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary in connection with the execution and delivery of this Agreement or its performance or its obligations hereunder or the consummation of the Merger and the other transactions contemplated by this Agreement, other than (i) (A) the filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") of the Joint Proxy Statement in definitive form, (B) the filing with the SEC, and declaration of effectiveness under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act"), of the registration statement on Form S-4 in connection with the issuance by CenturyLink of the Merger Consideration, in which the Joint Proxy Statement will be included

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as a prospectus (the "Form S-4"), and (C) the filing with the SEC of such reports under, and such other compliance with, the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), and the Securities Act, and the rules and regulations thereunder, as may be required in connection with this Agreement, the Merger and the other transactions contemplated by this Agreement, (ii) compliance with and filings under the Hart Scott Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976, as amended (the "HSR Act") and such other Consents, registrations, declarations, notices or filings as are required to be made or obtained under any foreign antitrust, competition, trade regulation or similar Laws, (iii) the filing of the Certificate of Merger with the Secretary of State of the State of Delaware and appropriate documents with the relevant authorities of the other jurisdictions in which CenturyLink and Qwest are qualified to do business, (iv) such Consents, registrations, declarations, notices or filings as are required to be made or obtained under the securities or "blue sky" laws of various states in connection with the issuance of the Merger Consideration, (v) such Consents from, or registrations, declarations, notices or filings made to or with, the Federal Communications Commission (the "FCC") or any other Governmental Entities (including State Regulators and local cable franchise authorities) (other than with respect to securities, antitrust, competition, trade regulation or similar Laws), in each case as may be required in connection with this Agreement, the Merger or the other transactions contemplated by this Agreement and are required with respect to mergers, business combinations or changes in control of telecommunications companies generally, (vi) such filings with and approvals of the NYSE as are required to permit the consummation of the Merger and the listing of the Merger Consideration and (vii) such other matters that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect (it being agreed that for purposes of this Section 3.05(b), effects resulting from or arising in connection with the matters set forth in clause (iv) of the definition of the term "Material Adverse Effect" shall not be excluded in determining whether a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect has occurred or would reasonably be expected to occur) and would not prevent or materially impede, interfere with, hinder or delay the consummation of the Merger.

Section 3.06. SEC Documents; Undisclosed Liabilities. (a) CenturyLink has furnished or filed all reports, schedules, forms, statements and other documents (including exhibits and other information incorporated therein) required to be furnished or filed by CenturyLink with the SEC since January 1, 2008 (such documents, together with any documents filed with the SEC during such period by CenturyLink on a voluntary basis on a Current Report on Form 8-K, but excluding the Joint Proxy Statement and the Form S-4, being collectively referred to as the "CenturyLink SEC Documents").

(b) Each CenturyLink SEC Document (i) at the time filed, complied in all material respects with the requirements of the Sarbanes Oxley Act of 2002 ("SOX") and the Exchange Act or the Securities Act, as the case may be, and the rules and regulations of the SEC promulgated thereunder applicable to such CenturyLink SEC Document and (ii) did not at the time it was filed (or if amended or superseded by a filing or amendment prior to the date of this Agreement, then at the time of such filing or amendment) contain any untrue statement of a material fact or omit to state a material fact required to be stated therein or necessary in order to make the statements therein, in light of the circumstances under which they were made, not misleading. Each of the consolidated financial statements of CenturyLink included in the CenturyLink SEC Documents complied at the time it was filed as to form in all material respects with applicable accounting requirements and the published rules and regulations of the SEC with respect thereto, was prepared in accordance with United States generally accepted accounting principles ("GAAP") (except, in the case of unaudited statements, as permitted by Form 10-Q of the SEC) applied on a consistent basis during the periods involved (except as may be indicated in the notes thereto) and fairly presented in all material respects the consolidated financial position of CenturyLink and its consolidated Subsidiaries as of the dates thereof and the consolidated results of their operations and cash flows for the periods shown (subject, in the case of unaudited statements, to normal year-end audit adjustments).

(c) Except (i) as reflected or reserved against in CenturyLink's consolidated audited balance sheet as of December 31, 2009 (or the notes thereto) as included in the Filed CenturyLink SEC Documents and (ii) for liabilities and obligations incurred in connection with or contemplated by this Agreement, neither CenturyLink nor any CenturyLink Subsidiary has any liabilities or obligations of any nature (whether accrued, absolute,

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contingent or otherwise) that, individually or in the aggregate, have had or would reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect.

(d) Each of the chief executive officer of CenturyLink and the chief financial officer of CenturyLink (or each former chief executive officer of CenturyLink and each former chief financial officer of CenturyLink, as applicable) has made all applicable certifications required by Rule 13a-14 or 15d-14 under the Exchange Act and Sections 302 and 906 of SOX with respect to the CenturyLink SEC Documents, and the statements contained in such certifications are true and accurate. For purposes of this Agreement, "chief executive officer" and "chief financial officer" shall have the meanings given to such terms in SOX. None of CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries has outstanding, or has arranged any outstanding, "extensions of credit" to directors or executive officers within the meaning of Section 402 of SOX.

(e) CenturyLink maintains a system of "internal control over financial reporting" (as defined in Rules 13a-15(f) and 15d-15(f) of the Exchange Act) sufficient to provide reasonable assurance (A) that transactions are recorded as necessary to permit preparation of financial statements in conformity with GAAP, consistently applied, (B) that transactions are executed only in accordance with the authorization of management and (C) regarding prevention or timely detection of the unauthorized acquisition, use or disposition of CenturyLink's properties or assets.

(f) The "disclosure controls and procedures" (as defined in Rules 13a-15(e) and 15d-15(e) of the Exchange Act) utilized by CenturyLink are reasonably designed to ensure that all information (both financial and non-financial) required to be disclosed by CenturyLink in the reports that it files or submits under the Exchange Act is recorded, processed, summarized and reported within the time periods specified in the rules and forms of the SEC and that all such information required to be disclosed is accumulated and communicated to the management of CenturyLink, as appropriate, to allow timely decisions regarding required disclosure and to enable the chief executive officer and chief financial officer of CenturyLink to make the certifications required under the Exchange Act with respect to such reports.

(g) Neither CenturyLink nor any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is a party to, or has any commitment to become a party to, any joint venture, off-balance sheet partnership or any similar Contract (including any Contract or arrangement relating to any transaction or relationship between or among CenturyLink and any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries, on the one hand, and any unconsolidated Affiliate, including any structured finance, special purpose or limited purpose entity or Person, on the other hand, or any "off-balance sheet arrangements" (as defined in Item 303(a) of Regulation S-K under the Exchange Act)), where the result, purpose or intended effect of such Contract is to avoid disclosure of any material transaction involving, or material liabilities of, CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries in CenturyLink's or such CenturyLink Subsidiary's published financial statements or other CenturyLink SEC Documents.

(h) Since January 1, 2008, none of CenturyLink, CenturyLink's independent accountants, the CenturyLink Board or the audit committee of the CenturyLink Board has received any oral or written notification of any (x) "significant deficiency" in the internal controls over financial reporting of CenturyLink, (y) "material weakness" in the internal controls over financial reporting of CenturyLink or (z) fraud, whether or not material, that involves management or other employees of CenturyLink who have a significant role in the internal controls over financial reporting of CenturyLink. For purposes of this Agreement, the terms "significant deficiency" and "material weakness" shall have the meanings assigned to them in Auditing Standard No. 5 of the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, as in effect on the date of this Agreement.

(i) None of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is, or has at any time since January 1, 2008 been, subject to the reporting requirements of Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Exchange Act.

Section 3.07. Information Supplied. None of the information supplied or to be supplied by CenturyLink or Merger Sub for inclusion or incorporation by reference in (i) the Form S-4 will, at the time the Form S-4 or any amendment or supplement thereto is declared effective under the Securities Act, contain any untrue statement of a material fact or omit to state any material fact required to be stated therein or necessary to make the statements therein not misleading or (ii) the Joint Proxy Statement will, at the date it is

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first mailed to each of CenturyLink's shareholders and Qwest's stockholders or at the time of each of the CenturyLink Shareholders Meeting and the Qwest Stockholders Meeting, contain any untrue statement of a material fact or omit to state any material fact required to be stated therein or necessary in order to make the statements therein, in light of the circumstances under which they are made, not misleading. The Form S-4 will comply as to form in all material respects with the requirements of the Securities Act and the rules and regulations thereunder, except that no representation is made by CenturyLink or Merger Sub with respect to statements made or incorporated by reference therein based on information supplied by Qwest for inclusion or incorporation by reference therein. The Joint Proxy Statement will comply as to form in all material respects with the requirements of the Exchange Act and the rules and regulations thereunder, except that no representation is made by CenturyLink or Merger Sub with respect to statements made or incorporated by reference therein based on information supplied by Qwest for inclusion or incorporation by reference therein.

Section 3.08. Absence of Certain Changes or Events. Since January 1, 2010, there has not occurred any fact, circumstance, effect, change, event or development that, individually or in the aggregate, has had or would reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. From January 1, 2010 to the date of this Agreement, each of CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries has conducted its respective business in the ordinary course in all material respects, and during such period there has not occurred:

(a) any declaration, setting aside or payment of any dividend or other distribution (whether in cash, stock or property or any combination thereof) in respect of any capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, CenturyLink or the capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries (other than (x) regular quarterly cash dividends in an amount not exceeding \$0.725 per share of CenturyLink Common Stock and (y) dividends or other distributions by a direct or indirect wholly owned CenturyLink Subsidiary to its parent) or any repurchase for value by CenturyLink of any capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, CenturyLink or the capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries;

(b) any incurrence of material indebtedness for borrowed money or any guarantee of such indebtedness for another Person, or any issue or sale of debt securities, warrants or other rights to acquire any debt security of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary other than the issuance of commercial paper or draws on existing revolving credit facilities in the ordinary course of business;

(c) (i) any transfer, lease, license, sale, mortgage, pledge or other disposal or encumbrance of any of CenturyLink's or CenturyLink's Subsidiaries' property or assets outside of the ordinary course of business consistent with past practice with a fair market value in excess of \$10,000,000 or (ii) any acquisitions of businesses, whether by merger, consolidation, purchase of property or assets or otherwise;

(d) (i) any granting by CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary to any current or former director or officer of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary of any material increase in compensation, bonus or fringe or other benefits or any granting of any type of compensation or benefits to any such Person not previously receiving or entitled to receive such type of compensation or benefits, except in the ordinary course of business consistent with past practice or as was required under any CenturyLink Benefit Plan in effect as of January 1, 2010, (ii) any granting by CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary to any Person of any severance, retention, change in control or termination compensation or benefits or any material increase therein, except with respect to new hires and promotions in the ordinary course of business and except as was required under any CenturyLink Benefit Plan in effect as of January 1, 2010, or (iii) any entry into or adoption of any material CenturyLink Benefit Plan or any material amendment of any such material CenturyLink Benefit Plan;

(e) any change in accounting methods, principles or practices by CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary, except insofar as may have been required by a change in GAAP; or

(f) any material elections or changes thereto with respect to Taxes by CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary or any settlement or compromise by CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary of any material Tax liability or refund, other than in the ordinary course of business.

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Section 3.09. Taxes. (a) Except for matters that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect: (i) each of CenturyLink and each CenturyLink Subsidiary has timely filed, taking into account any extensions, all Tax Returns required to have been filed and such Tax Returns are accurate and complete; (ii) each of CenturyLink and each CenturyLink Subsidiary has paid all Taxes required to have been paid by it other than Taxes that are not yet due or that are being contested in good faith in appropriate proceedings; and (iii) no deficiency for any Tax has been asserted or assessed by a taxing authority against CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary which deficiency has not been paid or is not being contested in good faith in appropriate proceedings.

(b) Neither CenturyLink nor any CenturyLink Subsidiary is a party to or is bound by any material Tax sharing, allocation or indemnification agreement or arrangement (other than such an agreement or arrangement exclusively between or among CenturyLink and wholly owned CenturyLink Subsidiaries).

(c) Within the past two years, neither CenturyLink nor any CenturyLink Subsidiary has been a "distributing corporation" or a "controlled corporation" in a distribution intended to qualify for tax-free treatment under Section 355 of the Code.

(d) Neither CenturyLink nor any CenturyLink Subsidiary has been a party to a transaction that, as of the date of this Agreement, constitutes a "listed transaction" for purposes of Section 6011 of the Code and applicable Treasury Regulations thereunder (or a similar provision of state law).

(e) Neither CenturyLink nor any CenturyLink Subsidiary has taken any action or knows of any fact that would reasonably be expected to prevent the Merger from qualifying for the Intended Tax Treatment.

Section 3.10. Benefits Matters: ERISA Compliance. (a) Section 3.10 of the CenturyLink Disclosure Letter sets forth, as of the date of this Agreement, a complete and correct list identifying any CenturyLink Benefit Plan. CenturyLink has delivered or made available to Qwest true and complete copies of (i) all material CenturyLink Benefit Plans or, in the case of any unwritten material CenturyLink Benefit Plan, a description thereof, (ii) the most recent annual report on Form 5500 (other than Schedule SSA (hereto) filed with the Internal Revenue Service (the "IRS") with respect to each material CenturyLink Benefit Plan (if any such report was required), (iii) the most recent summary plan description for each material CenturyLink Benefit Plan for which such summary plan description is required, (iv) each trust agreement and group annuity contract relating to any material CenturyLink Benefit Plan and (v) the most recent financial statements and actuarial reports for each CenturyLink Benefit Plan (if any). For purposes of this Agreement, "CenturyLink Benefit Plans" means, collectively (i) all "employee pension benefit plans" (as defined in Section 3(2) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended ("ERISA")), other than any plan which is a "multiemployer plan" within the meaning of Section 4001(a)(3) of ERISA (a "CenturyLink Multiemployer Plan"), "employee welfare benefit plans" (as defined in Section 3(1) of ERISA) and all other bonus, pension, profit sharing, retirement, deferred compensation, incentive compensation, equity or equity-based compensation, severance, retention, change in control, disability, vacation, death benefit, hospitalization, medical or other plans, arrangements or understandings providing, or designed to provide, material benefits to any current or former directors, officers, employees or consultants of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary and (ii) all employment, consulting, indemnification, severance, retention, change of control or termination agreements or arrangements (including collective bargaining agreements) between CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary and any current or former directors, officers, employees or consultants of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary.

(b) All CenturyLink Benefit Plans which are intended to be qualified and exempt from Federal income Taxes under Sections 401(a) and 501(a), respectively, of the Code, have been the subject of, have timely applied for or have not been eligible to apply for, as of the date of this Agreement, determination letters from the IRS to the effect that such CenturyLink Benefit Plans and the trusts created thereunder are so qualified and tax exempt, and no such determination letter has been revoked nor, to the knowledge of CenturyLink, has revocation been threatened, nor has any such CenturyLink Benefit Plan been amended since the date of its most recent determination letter or application therefor in any respect that would adversely affect its qualification or materially increase its costs.

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(c) Except for matters that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, (i) no CenturyLink Benefit Plan which is subject to Title IV of ERISA, Section 302 of ERISA, Section 412 of the Code or Section 4971 of the Code (a "CenturyLink Pension Plan") had, as of the respective last annual valuation date for each such CenturyLink Pension Plan, an "unfunded benefit liability" (within the meaning of Section 4001(a)(18) of ERISA), based on actuarial assumptions that have been furnished to Qwest, (ii) none of the CenturyLink Pension Plans either (A) has an "accumulated funding deficiency" or (B) has failed to meet any "minimum funding standards", as applicable (as such terms are defined in Section 302 of ERISA or Section 412 of the Code), whether or not waived, (iii) none of CenturyLink, any CenturyLink Subsidiary, any officer of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary or any of the CenturyLink Benefit Plans which are subject to ERISA, including the CenturyLink Pension Plans, any trust created thereunder or, to the Knowledge of CenturyLink, any trustee or administrator thereof, has engaged in a "prohibited transaction" (as such term is defined in Section 406 of ERISA or Section 4975 of the Code) or any other breach of fiduciary responsibility that could subject CenturyLink, any CenturyLink Subsidiary or any officer of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary to the Tax or penalty on prohibited transactions imposed by the Code, ERISA or other applicable Law, (iv) no CenturyLink Benefit Plans and trusts have been terminated, nor is there any intention or expectation to terminate CenturyLink Benefit Plans and trusts, (v) no CenturyLink Benefit Plans and trusts are the subject of any proceeding by any Person, including any Governmental Entity, that could be reasonably expected to result in a termination of any CenturyLink Benefit Plan or trust, (vi) there has not been any "reportable event" (as that term is defined in Section 4043 of ERISA) with respect to any CenturyLink Pension Plan during the last six years as to which the 30-day advance-notice requirement has not been waived and (vii) neither CenturyLink nor any CenturyLink Subsidiary has, or within the past six years had, contributed to, been required to contribute to, or has any liability (including "withdrawal liability" within the meaning of Title IV of ERISA) with respect to, any CenturyLink Multiemployer Plan.

(d) With respect to each CenturyLink Benefit Plan that is an employee welfare benefit plan, such CenturyLink Benefit Plan (including any CenturyLink Benefit Plan covering retirees or other former employees) may be amended to reduce benefits or limit the liability of CenturyLink or the CenturyLink Subsidiaries or terminated, in each case, without material liability to CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries on or at any time after the Effective Time.

(e) No CenturyLink Benefit Plan provides health, medical or other welfare benefits after retirement or other termination of employment (other than for continuation coverage required under Section 4980(B)(f) of the Code or applicable Law).

(f) Except for matters that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, (i) each CenturyLink Benefit Plan and its related trust, insurance contract or other funding vehicle has been administered in accordance with its terms and is in compliance with ERISA, the Code and all other Laws applicable to such CenturyLink Benefit Plan and (ii) CenturyLink and each of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is in compliance with ERISA, the Code and all other Laws applicable to the CenturyLink Benefit Plans.

(g) Except for matters that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, there are no pending or, to the Knowledge of CenturyLink, threatened claims by or on behalf of any participant in any of the CenturyLink Benefit Plans, or otherwise involving any such CenturyLink Benefit Plan or the assets of any CenturyLink Benefit Plan, other than routine claims for benefits.

(h) None of the execution and delivery of this Agreement, the obtaining of the CenturyLink Shareholder Approval or the consummation of the Merger or any other transaction contemplated by this Agreement (alone or in conjunction with any other event, including any termination of employment on or following the Effective Time) will (A) entitle any current or former director, officer, employee or consultant of CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries to any compensation or benefit, (B) accelerate the time of payment or vesting, or trigger any payment or funding, of any compensation or benefits or trigger any other material obligation under

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any CenturyLink Benefit Plan or (C) result in any breach or violation of, default under or limit CenturyLink's right to amend, modify or terminate any CenturyLink Benefit Plan.

(i) There has been no disallowance of a deduction under Section 162(m) or 280G of the Code for any amount paid or payable by CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary as employee compensation, whether under any contract, plan, program or arrangement, understanding or otherwise that has had or would be reasonably expected to have, individually or in the aggregate, a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect.

(j) Each CenturyLink Benefit Plan that is a "nonqualified deferred compensation plan" (as defined in Section 409A(d)(1) of the Code) that is subject to Section 409A of the Code has since (i) January 1, 2005 been maintained and operated in good faith compliance with Section 409A of the Code and Notice 2005-1, (ii) October 3, 2004, not been "materially modified" (within the meaning of Notice 2005-1) and (iii) January 1, 2009, been in documentary and operational compliance in all material respects with Section 409A of the Code.

(k) Except as, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, all contributions required to be made to any CenturyLink Benefit Plan by applicable Law, regulation, any plan document or other contractual undertaking, and all premiums due or payable with respect to insurance policies funding any Plan, for any period through the date hereof have been timely made or paid in full or, to the extent not required to be made or paid on or before the date hereof, have been fully reflected on the financial statements set forth in the CenturyLink SEC Documents. Each CenturyLink Benefit Plan that is an employee welfare benefit plan under Section 3(1) of ERISA either (i) is funded through an insurance company contract and is not a "welfare benefit fund" with the meaning of Section 419 of the Code or (ii) is unfunded.

(l) Except as, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, there does not now exist, nor do any circumstances exist that are reasonably likely to result in, any Controlled Group Liability that would be a liability of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary following the Closing. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, except as, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, neither CenturyLink nor any CenturyLink Subsidiary, nor any of their respective ERISA Affiliates, has engaged in any transaction described in (i) Section 4069 or (ii) Section 4204 or 4212 of ERISA with respect to any CenturyLink Multiemployer Plans.

(m) Except as, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, all CenturyLink Benefit Plans subject to the laws of any jurisdiction outside the United States (i) have been maintained in accordance with all applicable requirements, (ii) if they are intended to qualify for special tax treatment, meet all the requirements for such treatment, and (iii) if they are intended to be funded and/or book-reserved, are fully funded and/or book reserved, as appropriate, based upon reasonable actuarial assumptions.

Section 3.11. Litigation. There is no suit, action or other proceeding pending or, to the Knowledge of CenturyLink, threatened against CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary or any of their respective properties or assets that, individually or in the aggregate, has had or would reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, nor is there any Judgment outstanding against or, to the Knowledge of CenturyLink, investigation by any Governmental Entity involving CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary or any of their respective properties or assets that, individually or in the aggregate, has had or would reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. Since the date of this Agreement, there has been no change, event or development in any suit, action or proceeding that was pending against CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary or any of their respective properties or assets that, individually or in the aggregate, has had or would reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect (it being agreed that for purposes of this Section 3.11, effects resulting from or arising in connection with the matters set forth in clause (iv) of the definition of the term "Material Adverse Effect" shall not be excluded in determining whether a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect has occurred or would reasonably be expected to occur).

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Section 3.12. Compliance with Applicable Laws. Except for matters that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries are in compliance with all applicable Laws and CenturyLink Permits, including all applicable rules, regulations, directives or policies of the FCC, State Regulators or any other Governmental Entity. To the Knowledge of CenturyLink, except for matters that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, no action, demand or investigation by or before any Governmental Entity is pending or threatened alleging that CenturyLink or a CenturyLink Subsidiary is not in compliance with any applicable Law or CenturyLink Permit or which challenges or questions the validity of any rights of the holder of any CenturyLink Permit. This section does not relate to Tax matters, employee benefits matters, environmental matters or Intellectual Property Rights matters, which are the subjects of Sections 3.09, 3.10, 3.13 and 3.16, respectively.

Section 3.13. Environmental Matters. (a) Except for matters that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect:

(i) CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries are in compliance with all Environmental Laws, and neither CenturyLink nor any CenturyLink Subsidiary has received any written communication from a Governmental Entity that alleges that CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary is in violation of, or has liability under, any Environmental Law or any Permit issued pursuant to Environmental Law;

(ii) CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries have obtained and are in compliance with all Permits issued pursuant to any Environmental Law applicable to CenturyLink, the CenturyLink Subsidiaries and the CenturyLink Properties and all such Permits are valid and in good standing and will not be subject to modification or revocation as a result of the transactions contemplated by this Agreement (it being agreed that for purposes of this Section 3.13(a)(ii), effects resulting from or arising in connection with the matters set forth in clause (iv) of the definition of the term "Material Adverse Effect" shall not be excluded in determining whether a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect has occurred or would reasonably be expected to occur);

(iii) there are no Environmental Claims pending or, to the Knowledge of CenturyLink, threatened against CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries;

(iv) there have been no Releases of any Hazardous Material that could reasonably be expected to form the basis of any Environmental Claim against CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries or against any Person whose liabilities for such Environmental Claims CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries has, or may have, retained or assumed, either contractually or by operation of Law; and

(v) neither CenturyLink nor any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries has retained or assumed, either contractually or by operation of law, any liabilities or obligations that could reasonably be expected to form the basis of any Environmental Claim against CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries.

(b) As used herein:

(i) "Environmental Claim" means any administrative, regulatory or judicial actions, suits, orders, demands, directives, claims, liens, investigations, proceedings or written or oral notices of noncompliance or violation by or from any Person alleging liability of whatever kind or nature arising out of, based on or resulting from (y) the presence or Release of, or exposure to, any Hazardous Materials at any location, or (z) the failure to comply with any Environmental Law or any Permit issued pursuant to Environmental Law.

(ii) "Environmental Laws" means all applicable Federal, national, state, provincial or local Laws, Judgments, or Contracts issued, promulgated or entered into by or with any Governmental Entity, relating to pollution, natural resources or protection of endangered or threatened species, human health or the environment (including ambient air, surface water, groundwater, land surface or subsurface strata).

(iii) "Hazardous Materials" means (y) any petroleum or petroleum products, explosive or radioactive materials or wastes, asbestos in any form, and polychlorinated biphenyls; and (z) any other chemical,

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material, substance or waste that in relevant form or concentration is prohibited, limited or regulated under any Environmental Law.

(iv) "Release" means any actual or threatened release, spill, emission, leaking, dumping, injection, pouring, deposit, disposal, discharge, dispersal, leaching or migration into or through the environment (including ambient air, surface water, groundwater, land surface or subsurface strata) or within any building, structure, facility or fixture.

Section 3.14. Contracts. (a) As of the date of this Agreement, neither CenturyLink nor any CenturyLink Subsidiary is a party to any Contract required to be filed by CenturyLink as a "material contract" pursuant to Item 601(b)(10) of Regulation S-K under the Securities Act (a "Filed CenturyLink Contract") that has not been so filed.

(b) Section 3.14 of the CenturyLink Disclosure Letter sets forth, as of the date of this Agreement, a true and complete list, and CenturyLink has made available to Qwest true and complete copies, of (i) other than CenturyLink Permits imposing geographical limitations on operations, each agreement, Contract, understanding, or undertaking to which CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is a party that restricts in any material respect the ability of CenturyLink or its Affiliates to compete in any business or with any Person in any geographical area, (ii) each loan and credit agreement, Contract, note, debenture, bond, indenture, mortgage, security agreement, pledge, or other similar agreement pursuant to which any material Indebtedness of CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is outstanding or may be incurred, other than any such agreement between or among CenturyLink and the wholly owned CenturyLink Subsidiaries, (iii) each partnership, joint venture or similar agreement, Contract, understanding or undertaking to which CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is a party relating to the formation, creation, operation, management or control of any partnership or joint venture or to the ownership of any equity interest in any entity or business enterprise other than the CenturyLink Subsidiaries, in each case material to CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries, taken as a whole, (iv) each indemnification, employment, consulting, or other material agreement, Contract, understanding or undertaking with (x) any member of the CenturyLink Board or (y) any executive officer of CenturyLink, in each case, other than those Contracts filed as exhibits (including exhibits incorporated by reference) to any Filed CenturyLink SEC Documents or Contracts terminable by CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries on no more than 30 days' notice without liability or financial obligation to CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries, (v) each agreement, Contract, understanding or undertaking relating to the disposition or acquisition by CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries, with obligations remaining to be performed or liabilities continuing after the date of this Agreement, of any material business or any material amount of assets other than in the ordinary course of business, (vi) each material hedge, collar, option, forward purchasing, swap, derivative, or similar agreement, Contract, understanding or undertaking, and (vii) each agreement containing any "standstill" provisions or provisions of similar effect to which CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is a party or of which CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is a beneficiary. Each agreement, understanding or undertaking of the type described in this Section 3.14(b) and each Filed CenturyLink Contract is referred to herein as a "CenturyLink Material Contract."

(c) Except for matters which, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect (it being agreed that for purposes of this Section 3.15(c), effects resulting from or arising in connection with the matters set forth in clause (iv) of the definition of the term "Material Adverse Effect" shall not be excluded in determining whether a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect has occurred or would reasonably be expected to occur), (i) each CenturyLink Material Contract (including, for purposes of this Section 3.14(c), any Contract entered into after the date of this Agreement that would have been a CenturyLink Material Contract if such Contract existed on the date of this Agreement) is a valid, binding and legally enforceable obligation of CenturyLink or one of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries, as the case may be, and, to the Knowledge of CenturyLink, of the other parties thereto, except, in each case, as enforcement may be limited by bankruptcy, insolvency, reorganization or similar Laws affecting creditors' rights generally and by general principles of equity, (ii) each such CenturyLink Material Contract is in full force and effect, and (iii) none of CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is (with or without notice or lapse of time, or both) in breach or default under any

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such CenturyLink Material Contract and, to the Knowledge of CenturyLink, no other party to any such CenturyLink Material Contract is (with or without notice or lapse of time, or both) in breach or default thereunder.

Section 3.15. Properties. (a) CenturyLink and each CenturyLink Subsidiary has good and valid title to, or good and valid leasehold interests in, all their respective properties and assets (the "CenturyLink Properties") except in respects that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. The CenturyLink Properties are, in all respects, adequate and sufficient, and in satisfactory condition, to support the operations of CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries as presently conducted, except in respects that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. All of the CenturyLink Properties are free and clear of all Liens, except for Liens on material CenturyLink Properties that, individually or in the aggregate, do not materially impair and would not reasonably be expected to materially impair, the continued use and operation of such material CenturyLink Properties to which they relate in the conduct of CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries as presently conducted and Liens on other CenturyLink Properties that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. This Section 3.15 does not relate to Intellectual Property Rights matters, which are the subject of Section 3.16.

(b) CenturyLink and each of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries has complied with the terms of all leases, subleases and licenses entitling it to the use of real property owned by third parties ("CenturyLink Leases"), and all CenturyLink Leases are valid and in full force and effect, except as, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. CenturyLink and each CenturyLink Subsidiary is in exclusive possession of the properties or assets purported to be leased under all the CenturyLink Leases, except for such failures to have such possession of material properties or assets as, individually or in the aggregate, do not materially impair and would not reasonably be expected to materially impair, the continued use and operation of such material properties and assets to which they relate in the conduct of CenturyLink and CenturyLink Subsidiaries as presently conducted and failures to have such possession of immaterial properties or assets as, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect.

Section 3.16. Intellectual Property. CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries own, or are validly licensed or otherwise have the right to use, all patents, patent applications, patent rights, trademarks, trademark rights, trade names, trade name rights, service marks, service mark rights, copyrights, trade secrets, designs, domain names, lists, data, databases, processes, methods, schematics, technology, know how, documentation, and other proprietary intellectual property rights and any such rights in computer programs (collectively, "Intellectual Property Rights") as used in their business as presently conducted, except where the failure to have the right to use such Intellectual Property Rights, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. No actions, suits or other proceedings are pending or, to the Knowledge of CenturyLink, threatened that CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is infringing, misappropriating or otherwise violating the rights of any Person with regard to any Intellectual Property Right, except for matters that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. To the Knowledge of CenturyLink, no Person is infringing, misappropriating or otherwise violating the rights of CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries with respect to any Intellectual Property Right owned by CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries, except for such infringement, misappropriation or violation that, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have, a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. Since January 1, 2008, no prior or current employee or officer or any prior or current consultant or contractor of CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries has asserted or, to the Knowledge of CenturyLink, has any ownership in any Intellectual Property Rights used by CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries in the operation of their respective businesses, except as has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have, individually or in the aggregate, a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect.

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Section 3.17. Communications Regulatory Matters. (a) CenturyLink and each CenturyLink Subsidiary hold (i) all approvals, authorizations, certificates and licenses issued by the FCC or the state or local public service or public utility commissions or other similar state or local regulatory bodies ("State Regulators") that are required for CenturyLink and each CenturyLink Subsidiary to conduct its business, as presently conducted, which approvals, authorizations, certificates and licenses are set forth in Section 3.17(a)(i) of the CenturyLink Disclosure Letter, and (ii) all other material regulatory permits, approvals, licenses and other authorizations, including franchises, ordinances and other agreements granting access to public rights of way, issued or granted to CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary by a Governmental Entity that are required for CenturyLink and each CenturyLink Subsidiary to conduct its business, as presently conducted (clauses (i) and (ii) collectively, the "CenturyLink Licenses").

(b) Each CenturyLink License is valid and in full force and effect and has not been suspended, revoked, canceled or adversely modified, except where the failure to be in full force and effect, or the suspension, revocation, cancellation or modification of which has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have, individually or in the aggregate, a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. No CenturyLink License is subject to (i) any conditions or requirements that have not been imposed generally upon licenses in the same service, unless such conditions or requirements have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have, individually or in the aggregate, a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, or (ii) any pending regulatory proceeding or judicial review before a Governmental Entity, unless such pending regulatory proceeding or judicial review has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have, individually or in the aggregate, a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. CenturyLink has no Knowledge of any event, condition or circumstance that would preclude any CenturyLink License from being renewed in the ordinary course (to the extent that such CenturyLink License is renewable by its terms), except where the failure to be renewed has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have, individually or in the aggregate, a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect.

(c) The licensee of each CenturyLink License is in compliance with each CenturyLink License and has fulfilled and performed all of its obligations with respect thereto, including all reports, notifications and applications required by the Communications Act or the rules, regulations, policies, instructions and orders of the FCC (the "FCC Rules") or similar rules, regulations, policies, instructions and orders of State Regulators, and the payment of all regulatory fees and contributions, except (i) for exemptions, waivers or similar concessions or allowances and (ii) where such failure to be in compliance, fulfill or perform its obligations or pay such fees or contributions has not had, or would not reasonably be expected to have, individually or in the aggregate, a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect.

(d) CenturyLink or a CenturyLink Subsidiary owns 100% of the equity and controls 100% of the voting power and decision-making authority of each licensee of the CenturyLink Licenses.

Section 3.18. Agreements with Regulatory Agencies. Neither CenturyLink nor any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is subject to any material cease-and-desist or other material order or enforcement action issued by, or is a party to any material written agreement, consent agreement or memorandum of understanding with, or is a party to any material commitment letter or similar undertaking to, or is subject to any material order or directive by, or has been ordered to pay any material civil money penalty by, any Governmental Entity (other than a taxing authority, which is covered by Section 3.09), other than those of general application that apply to similarly situated providers of the same services or their Subsidiaries (each item in this sentence, whether or not set forth in the CenturyLink Disclosure Letter, a "CenturyLink Regulatory Agreement"), nor has CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries been advised in writing since January 1, 2008, by any Governmental Entity that it is considering issuing, initiating, ordering or requesting any such CenturyLink Regulatory Agreement.

Section 3.19. Labor Matters. As of the date of this Agreement, Section 3.19 of the CenturyLink Disclosure Letter sets forth a true and complete list of all collective bargaining or other labor union contracts applicable to any employees of CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries. To the Knowledge of CenturyLink, as of the date of this Agreement, no labor organization or group of employees of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary has made a pending demand for recognition or certification, and there are no

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representation or certification proceedings or petitions seeking a representation proceeding presently pending or threatened to be brought or filed, with the National Labor Relations Board or any other labor relations tribunal or authority. To the Knowledge of CenturyLink, there are no organizing activities, strikes, work stoppages, slowdowns, lockouts, material arbitrations or material grievances, or other material labor disputes pending or threatened against or involving CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary. None of CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries has breached or otherwise failed to comply with any provision of any collective bargaining agreement or other labor union Contract applicable to any employees of CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries, except for any breaches, failures to comply or disputes that, individually or in the aggregate, have not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. There are no written grievances or written complaints outstanding or, to the Knowledge of CenturyLink, threatened that individually or in the aggregate, has had or would reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect. CenturyLink has made available to Qwest true and complete copies of all collective bargaining agreements and other labor union contracts (including all amendments thereto) applicable to any employees of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary (the "CenturyLink CBAs"). Except as otherwise set forth in the CenturyLink CBAs, neither CenturyLink nor any CenturyLink Subsidiary (a) as of the date of this Agreement, has entered into any agreement, arrangement or understanding, whether written or oral, with any union, trade union, works council or other employee representative body or any material number or category of its employees which would prevent, restrict or materially impede the consummation of the Merger or other transactions contemplated by this Agreement or the implementation of any layoff, redundancy, severance or similar program within its or their respective workforces (or any part of them) or (b) has any express commitment, whether legally enforceable or not, to, or not to, modify, change or terminate any CenturyLink Benefit Plan.

Section 3.20. Brokers' Fees and Expenses. No broker, investment banker, financial advisor or other Person, other than Barclays Capital Inc., Evercore Group LLC and J.P. Morgan Securities Inc. (the "CenturyLink Financial Advisors"), the fees and expenses of which will be paid by CenturyLink, is entitled to any broker's, finder's, financial advisor's or other similar fee or commission in connection with the Merger or any of the other transactions contemplated by this Agreement based upon arrangements made by or on behalf of CenturyLink. CenturyLink will furnish to Qwest, promptly after the execution of such agreements, true and complete copies of all agreements between or among CenturyLink and/or Merger Sub and the CenturyLink Financial Advisors relating to the Merger or any of the other transactions contemplated by this Agreement.

Section 3.21. Opinion of Financial Advisor. The CenturyLink Board has received oral opinions from the CenturyLink Financial Advisors, to be confirmed in writing (with a copy provided solely for information purposes to Qwest promptly upon receipt by CenturyLink), to the effect that, as of the date of this Agreement, the consideration to be paid in the Merger by CenturyLink is fair to CenturyLink from a financial point of view.

Section 3.22. Insurance. Each of CenturyLink and the CenturyLink Subsidiaries maintains insurance policies with reputable insurance carriers against all risks of a character and in such amounts as are usually insured against by similarly situated companies in the same or similar businesses. Except as has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have, individually or in the aggregate, a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, each insurance policy of CenturyLink or any CenturyLink Subsidiary is in full force and effect and was in full force and effect during the periods of time such insurance policies is purported to be in effect, and neither CenturyLink nor any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries is (with or without notice or lapse of time, or both) in breach or default (including any such breach or default with respect to the payment of premiums or the giving of notice) under any such policy. There is no claim by CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries pending under any such policies that (a) has been denied or disputed by the insurer other than denials and disputes in the ordinary course of business consistent with past practice or (b) if not paid would constitute a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect.

Section 3.23. Merger Sub. CenturyLink is the sole stockholder of Merger Sub. Since its date of incorporation, Merger Sub has not carried on any business nor conducted any operations other than the execution of this Agreement, the performance of its obligations hereunder and matters ancillary thereto.

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Section 3.24. Affiliate Transactions. Except for (i) employment-related Contracts filed or incorporated by reference as an exhibit to the Filed CenturyLink SEC Documents, (ii) CenturyLink Benefits Plans or (iii) Contracts or arrangements entered into in the ordinary course of business with customers, suppliers or service providers, Section 3.24 of the CenturyLink Disclosure Letter sets forth a correct and complete list of the contracts or arrangements that are in existence as of the date of this Agreement between CenturyLink any of its Subsidiaries, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, any (x) present executive officer or director of either CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries or any person that has served as such an executive officer or director within the last five years or any of such officer's or director's immediate family members, (y) record or beneficial owner of more than 5% of the shares of CenturyLink Common Stock as of the date hereof or (z) to the Knowledge of CenturyLink, any affiliate of any such officer, director or owner (other than CenturyLink or any of the CenturyLink Subsidiaries).

Section 3.25. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Except as, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a CenturyLink Material Adverse Effect, (a) CenturyLink and its Affiliates, directors, officers and employees have complied with the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977, as amended (15 U.S.C. §§ 78a et seq. (1997 and 2000)) (the "Foreign Corrupt Practices Act"), and any other applicable anticorruption or antibribery laws; (b) CenturyLink and its Affiliates have developed and implemented a Foreign Corrupt Practices Act compliance program which includes corporate policies and procedures designed to ensure compliance with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and any other applicable anticorruption and antibribery laws; and (c) except for "facilitating payments" (as such term is defined in the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and other applicable Laws), neither CenturyLink nor any of its Affiliates, directors, officers, employees, agents or other representatives acting on its behalf have directly or indirectly (i) used any corporate funds for unlawful contributions, gifts, entertainment or other unlawful expenses relating to political activity, (ii) offered, promised, paid or delivered any fee, commission or other sum of money or item of value, however characterized, to any finder, agent or other party acting on behalf of or under the auspices of a governmental or political employee or official or governmental or political entity, political agency, department, enterprise or instrumentality, in the United States or any other country, that was illegal under any applicable Law, (iii) made any payment to any customer or supplier, or to any officer, director, partner, employee or agent of any such customer or supplier, for the unlawful sharing of fees to any such customer or supplier or any such officer, director, partner, employee or agent for the unlawful rebating of charges, (iv) engaged in any other unlawful reciprocal practice, or made any other unlawful payment or given any other unlawful consideration to any such customer or supplier or any such officer, director, partner, employee or agent, (v) taken any action or made any omission in violation of any applicable law governing imports into or exports from the United States or any foreign country, or relating to economic sanctions or embargoes, corrupt practices, money laundering, or compliance with unsanctioned foreign boycotts.

Section 3.26. No Other Representations or Warranties. Except for the representations and warranties contained in this Article III, Qwest acknowledges that none of CenturyLink, the CenturyLink Subsidiaries or any other Person on behalf of CenturyLink makes any other express or implied representation or warranty in connection with the transactions contemplated by this Agreement.

ARTICLE IV

Representations and Warranties of Qwest

Qwest represents and warrants to CenturyLink and Merger Sub that the statements contained in this Article IV are true and correct except as set forth in the Qwest SEC Documents filed and publicly available after January 1, 2010 and prior to the date of this Agreement (the "Filed Qwest SEC Documents") (excluding any disclosures in the Filed Qwest SEC Documents in any risk factors section, in any section related to forward looking statements and other disclosures that are predictive or forward-looking in nature) or in the disclosure letter delivered by Qwest to CenturyLink at or before the execution and delivery by Qwest of this Agreement (the "Qwest Disclosure Letter"). The Qwest Disclosure Letter shall be arranged in numbered and lettered sections corresponding to the numbered and lettered sections contained in this Article IV, and the disclosure in any section shall be deemed to qualify other sections in this Article IV to the extent (and only to

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the extent) that it is reasonably apparent from the face of such disclosure that such disclosure also qualifies or applies to such other sections.

Section 4.01. Organization, Standing and Power. Each of Qwest and each of Qwest's Subsidiaries (the "Qwest Subsidiaries") is duly organized, validly existing and in good standing under the laws of the jurisdiction in which it is organized (in the case of good standing, to the extent such jurisdiction recognizes such concept), except, in the case of the Qwest Subsidiaries, where the failure to be so organized, existing or in good standing, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a Qwest Material Adverse Effect. Each of Qwest and the Qwest Subsidiaries has all requisite power and authority and possesses all Permits necessary to enable it to own, lease or otherwise hold its properties and assets and to conduct its businesses as presently conducted (the "Qwest Permits"), except where the failure to have such power or authority or to possess Qwest Permits, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a Qwest Material Adverse Effect. Each of Qwest and the Qwest Subsidiaries is duly qualified or licensed to do business in each jurisdiction where the nature of its business or the ownership or leasing of its properties make such qualification necessary, other than in such jurisdictions where the failure to be so qualified or licensed, individually or in the aggregate, has not had and would not reasonably be expected to have a Qwest Material Adverse Effect. Qwest has delivered or made available to CenturyLink, prior to execution of this Agreement, true and complete copies of the amended and restated certificate of incorporation of Qwest in effect as of the date of this Agreement (the "Qwest Charter") and the by-laws of Qwest in effect as of the date of this Agreement (the "Qwest By-laws").

Section 4.02. Qwest Subsidiaries. (a) All the outstanding shares of capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, each Qwest Subsidiary have been validly issued and are fully paid and nonassessable and are owned by Qwest, by another Qwest Subsidiary or by Qwest and another Qwest Subsidiary, free and clear of all material Liens, and free of any other restriction (including any restriction on the right to vote, sell or otherwise dispose of such capital stock, voting securities or other equity interests), except for restrictions imposed by applicable securities laws. Section 4.02(a) of the Qwest Disclosure Letter sets forth, as of the date of this Agreement, a true and complete list of the Qwest Subsidiaries.

(b) Except for the capital stock and voting securities of, and other equity interests in, the Qwest Subsidiaries, neither Qwest nor any Qwest Subsidiary owns, directly or indirectly, any capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, or any interest convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for, any capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, any firm, corporation, partnership, company, limited liability company, trust, joint venture, association or other entity.

Section 4.03. Capital Structure. (a) The authorized capital stock of Qwest consists of 5,000,000,000 shares of Qwest Common Stock and 200,000,000 shares of preferred stock, par value \$1.00 per share (the "Qwest Preferred Stock" and together with the Qwest Common Stock, the "Qwest Capital Stock"). At the close of business on April 19, 2010, (i) 1,735,923,600 shares of Qwest Common Stock were issued and outstanding (excluding treasury and rabbi trust shares), of which 13,015,655 were Qwest Restricted Shares, (ii) no shares of Qwest Preferred Stock were issued and outstanding, (iii) 10,830,529 shares of Qwest Common Stock were held by Qwest in its treasury, (iv) 21,868 shares of Qwest Common Stock were held by Qwest in rabbi trust, (v) 173,592,360 shares of Qwest Common Stock were reserved and available for issuance pursuant to the Qwest Stock Plans, of which (A) 60,411,831 shares were issuable upon exercise of outstanding Qwest Stock Options and (B) 35,714,000 shares were potentially issuable under outstanding Qwest performance shares (assuming payout of 200%, which is the maximum attainable), (vi) 5,351,707 shares of Qwest Common Stock were reserved for issuance under the Qwest Employee Stock Purchase Plan (the "Qwest ESPP"), (vii) 24,519,454 shares of Qwest Common Stock were reserved for issuance under the Qwest Savings and Investment Plan (the "Qwest 401(k) Plan"), (viii) 83,267 shares of Qwest Common Stock were reserved for issuance under the Qwest Equity Incentive Plan for Nonemployee Directors, (ix) 10,000,000 shares of Qwest Common Stock were reserved for issuance under the Qwest Nonqualified Employee Stock Purchase Plan (the "Qwest Nonqualified ESPP"), (x) 64,312,614 shares of Qwest Common Stock were reserved for issuance in connection with exchanges of Qwest debt securities for Qwest Common Stock, and (xi) the number of unissued shares of Qwest Common Stock as may be issuable upon conversion of Qwest's 3.50% Convertible Senior Notes due 2025 (the "Qwest Convertible Notes") were reserved for issuance. Except as set forth in this

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Section 4.03(a), at the close of business on April 19, 2010, no shares of capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, Qwest were issued, reserved for issuance or outstanding. From the close of business on April 19, 2010 to the date of this Agreement, there have been no issuances by Qwest of shares of capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, Qwest, other than the issuance of Qwest Common Stock upon the exercise of Qwest Stock Options outstanding at the close of business on April 19, 2010 and in accordance with their terms in effect at such time.

(b) All outstanding shares of Qwest Common Stock (including Qwest Restricted Shares) are, and, at the time of issuance, all such shares that may be issued upon the exercise of Qwest Stock Options or pursuant to the Qwest Stock Plans or the Qwest ESPP will be, duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and nonassessable and not subject to, or issued in violation of, any purchase option, call option, right of first refusal, preemptive right, subscription right or any similar right under any provision of the DGCL, the Qwest Charter, the Qwest By-laws or any Contract to which Qwest is a party or otherwise bound. Except as set forth above in this Section 4.03, there are not issued, reserved for issuance or outstanding, and there are not any outstanding obligations of Qwest or any Qwest Subsidiary to issue, deliver or sell, or cause to be issued, delivered or sold, (x) any capital stock of Qwest or any Qwest Subsidiary or any securities of Qwest or any Qwest Subsidiary convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for shares of capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, Qwest or any Qwest Subsidiary, (y) any warrants, calls, options or other rights to acquire from Qwest or any Qwest Subsidiary, or any other obligation of Qwest or any Qwest Subsidiary to issue, deliver or sell, or cause to be issued, delivered or sold, any capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, Qwest or any Qwest Subsidiary or (z) any rights issued by or other obligations of Qwest or any Qwest Subsidiary that are linked in any way to the price of any class of Qwest Capital Stock or any shares of capital stock of any Qwest Subsidiary, the value of Qwest, any Qwest Subsidiary or any part of Qwest or any Qwest Subsidiary or any dividends or other distributions declared or paid on any shares of capital stock of Qwest or any Qwest Subsidiary. Except for acquisitions, or deemed acquisitions, of Qwest Common Stock or other equity securities of Qwest in connection with (i) the payment of the exercise price of Qwest Stock Options with Qwest Common Stock (including but not limited to in connection with "net exercises"), (ii) required tax withholding in connection with the exercise of Qwest Stock Options, the vesting of Qwest Restricted Shares and the vesting or delivery of other awards pursuant to the Qwest Stock Plans, and (iii) forfeitures of Qwest Stock Options and Qwest Restricted Shares, there are not any outstanding obligations of Qwest or any of the Qwest Subsidiaries to repurchase, redeem or otherwise acquire any shares of capital stock or voting securities or other equity interests of Qwest or any Qwest Subsidiary or any securities, interests, warrants, calls, options or other rights referred to in clause (x), (y) or (z) of the immediately preceding sentence. With respect to Qwest Stock Options, (i) each grant of a Qwest Stock Option was duly authorized no later than the Grant Date for such option by all necessary corporate action, including, as applicable, approval by the Qwest Board (or a duly constituted and authorized committee or subcommittee thereof), and (ii) the per share exercise price of each Qwest Stock Option was at least equal to the fair market value of a share of Qwest Common Stock on the applicable Grant Date. There are no debentures, bonds, notes or other Indebtedness of Qwest having the right to vote (or, other than the Qwest Convertible Notes, convertible into, or exchangeable for, securities having the right to vote) on any matters on which stockholders of Qwest may vote ("Qwest Voting Debt"). Neither Qwest nor any of the Qwest Subsidiaries is a party to any voting agreement with respect to the voting of any capital stock or voting securities of, or other equity interests in, Qwest. Neither Qwest nor any of the Qwest Subsidiaries is a party to any agreement pursuant to which any Person is entitled to elect, designate or nominate any director of Qwest or any of the Qwest Subsidiaries.

(c) Qwest has the right to call all of the outstanding Qwest Convertible Notes for redemption at a redemption price in cash equal to 100% of the principal amount thereof, together with accrued and unpaid interest, on November 20, 2010, and if any holder of Qwest Convertible Notes exercises its conversion rights thereunder, Qwest has the right to pay cash in lieu of all shares that would otherwise be issuable upon such conversion. The Qwest Convertible Notes are not, as of the date hereof, convertible by the holders thereof and Qwest has not issued any shares of Qwest Common Stock upon conversion of the Qwest Convertible Notes.