

United States Senate

June 12, 2013

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Acting Chairwoman Mignon Clyburn
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
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0608

Dear Acting Chairwoman Clyburn:

The time has come for television video consumers to have the option to either purchase individual channels or the tiers of channels currently offered by cable and satellite companies. Today, this option does not exist and consumers are forced to buy channels they do not want. This is wrong and action should be taken.

Recently, I introduced legislation to provide consumers with the option to purchase television channels individually from their cable or satellite provider, otherwise known as multichannel video programming distributor (MVPD). My legislation, the Television Consumer Freedom Act, contains no mandates and uses existing law to incentivize greater choice in the video market for consumers. The current television video market forces consumers to pay for channels they do not watch.

If enacted, my legislation would allow programming tiers to remain, but also incentivize the offering of individual channels to consumers. If the MVPDs are right, and the current tiered programming model is the best value for consumers, then the programmers who bundle their television channels and the MVPDs that offer tiers to consumers should not be afraid of an a la carte option for consumers. My instinct tells me they are wrong, and industry references to a "Golden Age" of television apply to everyone but the American consumer.

Opponents of my legislation suggest that the current model of offering television programming in tiers provide consumers with the best available value. But with studies finding cable prices increasing over six percent a year over the last 16 years, and consumers on average only watching 18 of the 130 channels they purchase, what consumers really believe they are getting a good deal? The truth is the current socialized television model, where popular channels are subsidizing less popular channels, is incredibly anti-consumer.

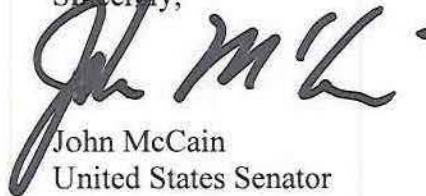
The response to my legislation has been astounding. Consumers want options that the current television market is not providing. Clearly, this begins with providing consumers with greater control over what they pay for. As policymakers, I believe it is our responsibility to lend voice to the American consumer, call attention to clear market unfairness, and shift the current

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regulatory balance towards consumers. For too long, the government has entered the market on behalf of special interest to afford businesses the opportunity to develop and markets to mature. That time has passed. As such, I call on the Commission to review this issue and take steps to shift this balance toward consumers, by providing consumers with greater choice when purchasing television video.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John McCain", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John McCain
United States Senator