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July 31, 2014

The Honorable Thomas E. Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Received & Inspected

AUG 18 2014

FCC Mail Room

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Dear Chairman Wheeler:

We write to respectfully request that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) halt its current rulemaking proposal to repeal the Sports Blackout Rule. The elimination of this rule may unnecessarily upend the broadcast television model and limit the availability of valuable programming to all Americans.

Many constituents in our communities depend on free, over-the-air television for news, entertainment and sports, including NFL games. According to a 2013 survey, 60 million Americans – 41% of whom are minorities – rely exclusively on over-the-air (OTA) television. An estimated 22% of African American, 23% of Asian, and 25 % of Latino households are OTA reliant. Many of these households include lower-income adults and seniors, who cannot afford the rising cost of pay-TV services.

We are concerned with the FCC's proposal to eliminate the sports blackout rule and undermine the ability of sports programming, particularly NFL games, to remain widely available on free television. Without this rule in place, cable and satellite television providers would potentially be able to undermine contractual agreements between professional sports leagues and broadcast networks that both support attendance at games and improve the viewing experience for fans in the stadium, as well as those watching at home.


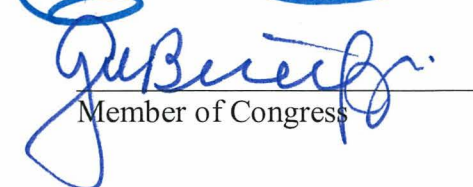
We believe the current system works well, especially for fans that rely on broadcast television. During the 2013 season, 99% of NFL games were sold out and broadcast on free, local TV. Moreover, the NFL is the *only* sports league that makes available *all* of its games, both regular season and playoffs, on free television. Moreover, these live events are not only the most watched programming on television, but also support jobs, businesses and taxes for local communities.

The FCC first adopted its rule nearly 40 years ago to support broadcast television and keep professional sports programming available to all Americans. We continue to fully support this goal and are concerned about changes to broadcast rules that may negatively affect our constituents and potentially reduce the availability or quality of television programming they can access. Therefore, we respectfully ask that you suspend the rulemaking proposal to repeal the Sports Blackout Rule.


Sincerely,



Member of Congress


Member of Congress

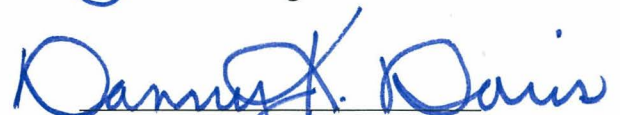

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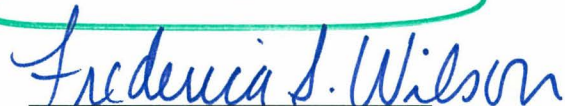

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