



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0916

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July 11, 2019

Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Pai:

I am writing to express concern that communities in my congressional district have experienced blackouts of local television stations due to failed contract negotiations between AT&T/DIRECTV and Nexstar Media Group.

As of 11:59 p.m. on July 3, AT&T/DIRECTV subscribers in Tampa Bay are no longer able to view broadcast stations WFLA, NBC, and WTTA. This widespread blackout comes a year after a historic acquisition by AT&T of Time Warner, and six months after they raised subscription prices on consumers for DIRECTV and DIRECTV NOW.

Furthermore, it was particularly poorly-timed: during the July 4th holiday when families gather to watch fireworks, concerts, and other special community programming; before the US Women's National Soccer Team's historic World Cup finals game on Sunday, July 7; and the same day as a massive earthquake in Southern California.

According to WFLA and WTTA, DIRECTV requested that my constituents be "kept in the dark" about the pending contract expiration. Furthermore, DIRECTV/AT&T reportedly did not accept Nexstar's offer for a short 30-day extension, which would have protected our constituents from a July 4th blackout of network shows, special events, sports, and local news while the parties continued negotiating a new agreement.

I urge the FCC to take any appropriate action to help ensure that AT&T/DIRECTV acts in the public interest and that Nextstar receives fair and equitable treatment in their efforts to provide news, sports, entertainment and other local programming to my constituents.

Sincerely,

Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress