

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

279

April 3, 2020

The Honorable Ajit Pai, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C., 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

As you begin implementation of the Television Viewer Protection Act (enacted as part of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020), we call to your attention important, pro-consumer provisions that will address the lack of transparency and unfairness of certain billing practices in the pay-TV market. We urge you to vigorously enforce this law to ensure consumers receive the transparency and rights they have long deserved.

Last October, Consumer Reports published a comprehensive study of runaway add-on fees tacked on to the pay-TV bills of Americans. The study concluded that cable TV consumers are paying an extra \$450 a year on average in company-imposed fees. Consumers are often not explicitly told at point of sale about the total charges they will face, and they have no right to cancel once they receive their bills.

Inspired by the *Truth-in-Billing, Remedies, and User Empowerment over Fees (TRUE Fees) Act of 2019*, which we respectively introduced in the Senate and House of Representatives, the new law requires multichannel video programming distributors (such as cable, satellite, and telco video content providers) to disclose an all-in price to consumers, including fees and taxes, before consumers sign up for a service; provide consumers a formal notice of fees and all-in prices within 24 hours of signing up for a service; and grant consumers 24 hours to cancel after receiving formal notice of fees, without penalty, just as they can when purchasing an airline ticket. Finally, internet services providers are prohibited from charging consumers for equipment they do not use. This provision is explicitly intended to outlaw practices like that of Frontier Communications, which press reports indicate is charging consumers for company-provided routers, even when consumers use their own router.

The pro-consumer reforms outlined above are scheduled to go into effect on June 20, 2020. In anticipation of the effective date, we would like to receive your assurance that the Commission fully intends to enforce the new law. We would also like to know what, if any, guidance the Commission intends to provide multichannel video programming distributors about compliance.

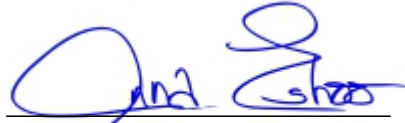
Consumers deserve price transparency, a right to change their mind without exorbitant penalties, and the knowledge that they will only be charged for services and equipment they actually use. Federal law now provides these assurances, and we appreciate the

Commission executing the will of the U.S. Congress to promote this critical consumer protection statute.

Most gratefully,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Michael O’Rielly, Commissioner
 The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner
 The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner
 The Honorable Geoffrey Starks, Commissioner