
**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *All-In Pricing for Cable and Satellite Television Service*, Report and Order, MB Docket 23-203.

Today, we take a stand. The hard-to-understand asterisks and fine print that litter advertisements and bills for cable and satellite TV service soon will be extinct. We impose a simple requirement: these ads, and these bills, must include the “all-in” price – the total amount that the consumer will pay for video programming service. This just makes plain sense. In fact, in 2019 Congress passed a law *requiring* cable and satellite providers to provide customers with transparent pricing information, both before the consumer enters into a contract for video service, then in writing within 24 hours of the consumer entering into that contract, and then monthly on the consumer’s electronic bill.

And yet, the record shows that many consumers are still confused. Deeply confused. Providers split out programming fees so as to make them appear optional, when in reality they charge the “broadcast television fee” to all subscribers.¹ Too many families are surprised by the bottom-line price they pay for video service on a monthly basis. Too many experience bill shock, and have their monthly budgets blown by unexpected line-item fees. That’s not fair.

Generally, providers may choose to charge whatever price they believe the market will bear. But to keep that market robust and equitable, consumers must have the ability to make informed choices. By adopting the all-in rule today, we are ensuring that they do. We are empowering them to more easily comparison shop and choose the plan that is right for them. We are making certain that consumers may trust that the deal they believe they’re entering into is the one they’ll actually get. And that trust benefits consumers and providers alike.

I want to thank the Commission staff for their good work on this item, and their continued work on our pending consumer protection-focused items in this space. The all-in rule has my full support.

¹ These fees may be substantial. See Jon Brodtkin, “Comcast’s sneaky Broadcast TV fee hits \$27, making a mockery of advertised rates,” *Ars Technica* (Nov. 28, 2022), <https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2022/11/comcasts-sneaky-broadcast-tv-fee-hits-27-making-a-mockery-of-advertised-rates/>.