



September 9, 2014

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller IV  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Thune  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rockefeller and Ranking Member Thune,

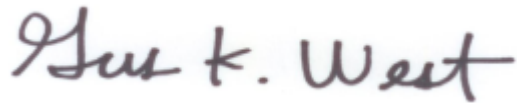
The Hispanic Institute has watched the debate around reauthorization of the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act (STELA) and publicly supports a clean STELA bill. For that reason, we believe the add-on proposal known as “Local Choice” is anti-consumer and pro-pay-TV. This legislation would essentially strip the basic tier to force television programming into an a la carte model, raising consumer bills, threatening the diversity of broadcast and local program development, and more importantly, decreasing access to valuable television programming.

This proposal negatively impacts all consumers, but those who watch Spanish language television would be disproportionately affected by this new business model. Instead of receiving the bundle of channels currently guaranteed with every pay-TV subscription package, viewers would select their own line up of broadcast television channels and pay for them separately. Because not all people can watch Spanish- language programming, Spanish speaking households would wind up paying a higher price per capita for this access than under the current pay-TV system.

What is priced as a premium is really vital, important information that at times may even save lives. Broadcast television plays a huge role in minority and underserved communities, often providing public service announcements and important information such as where to vaccinate against the flu or when and how to register a child for school. Local television and network personalities are an active part of local communities.

Studies have shown that under an a la carte model, minority ownership and diversity programming do not survive and monthly cable bills rise rapidly, costing consumers. This is a concern for our organization and the Latino community we represent. For years we have fought for inclusion only to find legislative proposals that threaten to undermine this progress. We are certain this was not your intent in crafting this proposal, but we believe it would be best for Latinos across the country if Local Choice was simply blacked out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Gus K. West". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Gus West, President  
The Hispanic Institute

Cc: The Members of the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
The Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus