



March 3, 2014

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications
and Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications
and Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Eshoo:

The Hispanic Institute works on issues important to the Hispanic community and we are disappointed to see the interests and profits of pay-TV providers coming before the Hispanic consumer.

A proposed change to the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act (STELA) would give pay-TV providers the freedom to remove broadcast channels from the most affordable option in subscription services, basic tier service. Moreover, a Spanish-speaking household wanting the full range of Spanish language networks may have to subscribe to higher-priced tiers because the provision would give pay-TV providers the freedom to split up these popular channels to maximize their profits. In the Hispanic community, Spanish-language networks not only provide popular programming, but also serve as important community resources and trusted advisors on a wide range of issues from the importance of the Census to the need for Hispanic political participation. And like every other TV viewer in the country, our communities turn to these local channels for up to the minute information on weather conditions and other emergency information. Allowing these changes to basic tier service would make monthly cable bills- already an affordability issue given constant rate hikes-even costlier for Hispanic consumers.

In these challenging times, many Latino families have had to face tough economic decisions while pay-TV providers have raked in record profits. Access to broadcast television and the critical information from Spanish-language networks should not be one of these choices. We respectfully ask that the basic tier service remain affordable and accessible for the local communities who need it the most.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gus K. West".

Gus K. West
Board Chair and President, The Hispanic Institute

Cc: The Members of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
The Honorable Rubén E. Hinojosa, Chairman, Congressional Hispanic Caucus
The Honorable Xavier Becerra, Chairman, House Democratic Caucus
The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen