

MARY GAY SCANLON
5TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEE ON
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COMMERCIAL, AND ADMINISTRATIVE
LAW

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON RULES
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
THE MODERNIZATION OF CONGRESS

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May 23, 2019

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
455 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20544

Re: MB Docket No. 05-311

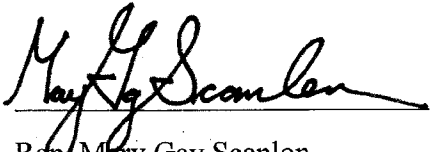
Dear Chairman Pai:

I am writing to express concern with the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM), "Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 as Amended by the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992" (MB Docket No. 05-311). The negative effect this change will have on Public, Education and Government (PEG) channels concerns me greatly. I believe this decision undermines the 1984 Cable Communications Policy Act and will do immense damage to local communities.

Under the FCC's proposed rule, PEG channels would be thrown into financial jeopardy with local communities lacking the funds needed to support these important institutions. By adding the value of PEG channels as a benefit to be deducted from franchise fees, future franchise payments would be greatly reduced, restricting funds for PEG programming. In effect, this rule change is simply a loophole to allow cable companies to avoid paying for their use of a public medium.

PhillyCAM is one of these over 2,000 PEGs which provide essential public programs and has been instrumental in supporting the Philadelphia community for years. Through the production of local media content, PhillyCAM has provided local neighborhoods, schools, and community organizations with outlets in which they have been able to promote wellness, local performing arts, historical preservation, and community concerns. With PEG funding, PhillyCAM supports numerous educational programs from introductory video and audio production courses, to an after-school youth media program and more advanced technical workshops in editing, camerawork, news reporting and producing. PEGs, like PhillyCAM, provide countless services to their communities and in a time of ever-increasing consolidation of media monopolies, are some of the only outlets for low income and disadvantaged communities to engage with their local media.

I strongly urge you to keep local communities in mind as you consider altering the definition of a franchise fee. It is vital that all neighborhoods have equitable access to PEGs and this proposed rule would effectively hurt community engagement with public media resources, isolating lower-income neighborhoods from critical services. I ask you to please work towards ensuring local communities have fair and equal access to PEGs so that all Americans can engage with public programming.



Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon