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LaKimba B. DeSadier
NBCSL Executive Director

October 13, 2014

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications
Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Applications of AT&T, Inc. and DIRECTV for Consent to Assign or Transfer Control of Licenses & Authorizations, MB Docket No. 14-90

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) supports the merger of AT&T and DIRECTV.

Imagine having the high speed Internet connectivity that permits you to access vital information, career and educational opportunities, health information and care, and even entertainment via high-speed Internet connectivity. Many Americans today don't have to imagine this scenario, because they already have access to high speed Internet service.

But for too many underserved, low income, small and rural communities, access to reliable, fast modern Internet connectivity in 2014 is still a fantasy. That's a problem not only for those communities and their citizens, but for the entire nation, because the availability of high speed broadband service delivers opportunities for enhanced quality of life, improved economic stability, increased entrepreneurship, and greater civic engagement, as well as improved access to public safety information. For many of our minority and low-income communities, access to these opportunities can truly be transformative.

As the nation's largest membership association of black state legislators, the NBCSL is committed to educating and creating opportunities for our constituents. Our members are black legislators from all across the country, and we work together to provide a voice for underrepresented and impoverished communities. Of course, our priority is to implement policies and support solutions that will benefit all Americans.

That's why we view increasing access to state of the art Internet service as a critical issue for our constituents, and that's why we support this merger of a best-in-class mobile/broadband network provider and a premier video provider. It is a unique union that can benefit our African American communities and indeed, will offer benefits and solutions for all Americans. The combined company will be able to offer important consumer benefits like superior service and new bundling options, as well as deliver content to consumers across multiple screens – TVs, laptops, and mobile devices.

The merger is expected to increase competition; not only that, but as part of the merger, AT&T has committed to enhance and expand the availability of high speed broadband service to

millions of customer locations, mainly in rural, underserved areas, who will gain new service options and choices as well as an additional strong competitor in their local markets. Many of those consumers do not currently have any option for reliable, fast connectivity.

We also must note that AT&T has a proud record on diversity, which we commend and applaud. In 2013, a full 48 percent of AT&T's new hires were people of color. Also in 2013, AT&T spent over \$15 billion with diverse suppliers; that equaled 28% of all of AT&T's spend. This merger will bring even more employment opportunities for diverse communities and additional opportunities for diverse suppliers, and that's on top of the remarkable consumer benefits, including video services and expanded access to high-speed Internet service.

We call on the FCC to approve this merger, and we look forward to seeing all Americans enjoying the benefits it will deliver.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joe Armstrong".

Rep. Joe Armstrong (TN)
President
National Black Caucus of State Legislators