



CHARLES BARRON
COUNCIL MEMBER, 42ND DISTRICT
BROOKLYN

DISTRICT OFFICE
1962 LINDEN BLVD.
BROOKLYN, NY 11207
(718) 649-9498
FAX (718) 649-3111

CITY HALL OFFICE
250 BROADWAY, ROOM 1823
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 788-6957

barron@council.nyc.ny.us

THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

CHAIR
HIGHER EDUCATION

COMMITTEES
CONSUMER AFFAIRS

LAND MARKS, PUBLIC SITING & MARITIME USES

LAND USE

WOMEN'S ISSUES

July 8, 2004

Michael K. Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

MB Docket No. 04-207

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed "a la carte" cable system being considered in Congress, as it does not benefit consumers.

The finest quality of our current cable system is its ever increasing diversity. Over the past twenty years, the number of cable program networks has grown from 28 to 339, with the array of programs offered on existing consumers networks dramatically increasing annually. With the improved diversification of programming, American consumers have benefited from exposure to important channels that support varied voices, such as BET, Telemundo, TV One, ESPN Deportes, C-SPAN and The Learning Channel. Correspondingly, the viewing of cable programming has steadily increased.

The economics of the cable industry are based on licensing agreements between cable programmers and operators, the cost of which are passed onto consumers, and national and local advertising. Advertising earnings are generally based on the number of viewers a channel attracts. If a channel appeals to a specialized audience, under the "a la carte" system, its viewership will decline, as occasional viewers today would no longer subscribe. Loss of these viewers and those who might watch these channels regularly and not when offered a "a la carte" will severely reduce advertising revenue and increase the cost of licensing agreements and the costs passed onto consumers.

Further, if channels do not have adequate revenue, the quality and diversification of programming will decrease. Judith McHale, President of Democracy Communications, has urged that "Discovery's award-winning networks will not exist in an *a la carte* environment and consumers will have lost the channels they regard as the pre-eminent source of high quality, family-friendly programming." Many of these channels will be forced out of business. We will no longer be able to enjoy the diverse programming of today.

An impressive and vibrant cable programming industry has developed without the need of government regulation. Cable offers consumers an incredible entertainment educational value. Please help sustain this system. Do not support the "a la carte" proposal.

Sincerely,

Council Member Charles Barron
42nd District, Brooklyn NY