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July 8, 2004

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

MB Docket No. 04-207

Dear Mr. Powell:

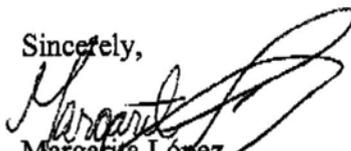
I am writing in opposition to the proposed "a la carte" cable system being considered in Congress, as it does not benefit consumers. As a New York City Council Member who represents a diverse constituency in Lower Manhattan, this proposal would have negative consequences in regard to viewer's choice in programming and proportionate representation in the cable industry.

In fact, 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 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, NY1 Noticias, and the Learning Channel. Correspondingly, the viewing of cable programming has steadily increased.

Under the "a la carte" system, where viewers pay separately for each channel, there is little likelihood that consumers will spend their money on channels about which they have little knowledge. A new network will have no opportunity to build an audience and become successful. This will also result in higher expenses for channels that remain. Thus, the channels that appeal to more specialized audiences, particularly ethnic, foreign-language and niche programming, would have trouble attracting enough subscribers to survive. Ultimately, this situation would result in generic and low quality programming aimed at the majority. The minority voice would be silenced in the "a la carte" system.

I implore you to reject the "a la carte" system. Help keep diverse programming on the air. For the sake of the continued success that is our pluralist nation.

Sincerely,


Margarita López
Council Member, 2nd C.D.