Exhibit A

Testimony
of
Mr. Charles F. Dolan
Chairman, Cablevision Systems Corporation
before the
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation
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Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee. I am Charles Dolan, Chairman of Cablevision Systems Corporation. We are a cable and programming company. Our cable company serves a market of 4 million homes in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. Our programming company produces sports, news and entertainment programming for the New York City area. We also originate six regional sports channels for areas outside of New York, and we operate national cable networks such as American Movie Classics and Independent Film Channel.

I appreciate this opportunity to present our perspective on the issues before the Committee.

Capital spending has long been a way of life for the cable industry. Operating a cable system involves continuous investment to extend and upgrade facilities, especially of late. In the last few years, the cable industry

has invested close to $70 billion to bring advanced digital services to its customers. Cablevision, like other companies, has introduced total addressability, HDTV, VOD, high-speed Internet access and IP telephony.

Of course, this investment is intended to make our services more attractive to our customers and more competitive in the marketplace. Particularly, the new technology that our industry is installing gives our customers greater choice, the power to create the menu they want on the television screens in their home.

Cablevision wishes to offer more for less to everyone. Cablevision wants its customers to be able to pick and choose among its services, selecting what appeals to them, rejecting what doesn't, determining for themselves how much they will spend, just as they do everyday in the supermarket or the shopping mall.

Unfortunately, our customers' shopping carts face a littered road ahead. Debris left over from our industry's long technological and legislative history. Unwanted programming is being forced into the home, particularly sports programming. The cable bill at the end of the month is increasing against the customer's wishes.

It may be time to address some of the industry rules and practices that have had these unintended consequences. Three of these are in particular need of reconsideration:

· Government Mandated "Must Buy" - the customer cannot buy what he wants until after he has bought what the government tells him he must buy;

· Expanded Basic - after the customer buys what the government tells him he must, then before he is permitted any choices of his own he is required to buy the programming that the industry tells him comes first; and

· Retransmission Consent - this is government granted authority exercised by network owned and operated broadcast stations, or network affiliates. Retransmission consent gives these stations the power to deny the national broadcast networks to local cable audiences. To carry the networks, the cable operator often must agree to compel his customers to buy cable programming owned by the broadcast stations whether they want it or not.

Government must buy through mandatory basic! Industry must buy through expanded basic! Network must buy through retransmission consent!

These three are the building blocks of ever-escalating cable prices. Like any tower made of such unwieldy blocks, when built too high, it must inevitably come tumbling down.

What customers want today, what they are beginning to insist upon, is the right to select. The customer objects to being told that he must pay for programming he doesn't want in order to be permitted the programming he prefers.

Cablevision's recent dispute with the YES network is a case in point.

When the YES Network came into existence, it demanded from Cablevision nearly four times more than we had paid the year before for the same programming. YES insisted that every expanded basic subscriber pay for this programming whether or not they had any interest in the Yankees or baseball or sports.

Cablevision believes that it is the right of the Yankees to set any price they wish for their programming. Cablevision believes also that it is the right of each subscriber to accept or reject that price. Accordingly, Cablevision offered to carry the Yankees and let YES set its own price. YES blacked out the Yankees on Cablevision for a year and a half before they grudgingly

accepted the principle of that offer. What has happened since? Of 2 million Cablevision subscribers offered the opportunity to accept the Yankees at $1.95 or less per month, fewer than 9% have accepted to date, 91% so far have said "no thanks."

With the YES experience as context, I respectfully urge you to consider a few specific statutory changes. These would remove impediments to greater customer choice and give customers more control over their cable costs.

First, the statutory "must buy" in the Cable Act must be eliminated. The must-carry provisions of the Cable Act already compel cable operators to carry all local broadcast stations within a market, even those that may be of marginal interest.

The "must buy" provisions go a step further. They require consumers to purchase that tier of programming as a prerequisite to the purchase of programming they want. Because of "must buy", our customers are required to purchase all of our broadcast basic tier, adding about $13.00 to their monthly bill, regardless of whether or not they wish to receive this government mandated tier.

To help the dairy industry, for example, would the government insist that all customers entering a supermarket to buy a loaf of bread be required to buy a dozen eggs and a quart of milk before they can purchase their bread?

Second, Congress should establish as a goal that no program vendor may demand as a condition of affiliation that the cable operator require all his customers to buy that vendor's programming.

Let the customer decide!

Third, retransmission consent for broadcast signals must be reevaluated. Commercial broadcast networks and their affiliates are using a valuable government resource - free broadcast spectrum - to leverage carriage of an increasing number of their own cable program channels as a condition of access to the national broadcast networks. As a result, cable operators are forced to carry - and consumers forced to purchase more and more broadcaster-owned cable programming as part of their expanded basic package regardless of consumer interest in that programming. These unfair "tying" practices are being employed in negotiations over digital carriage as well. They have had the perverse effect of making it increasingly difficult for cable or independent programmers without such leverage to launch new services.

It is not surprising that retransmission consent has led to a dramatic expansion of control of cable programming by national broadcasters, from 8 channels before the '92 Cable Act, to 54 today. Overall, all broadcasters now control 63 cable networks.

In this vein, the Committee should note that News Corporation's announced acquisition of DirecTV will seriously compound this problem. In New York, for example, where News Corp. owns two VHF broadcast stations, a daily newspaper, a broadcast network, a movie studio, a satellite service and four cable networks, woe be to the cable operator who hesitates to accept News Corp.'s retransmission demands.

In closing, I appreciate the opportunity provided by the Committee to review adjustments to federal policies. Such adjustments will, in my view, facilitate the beneficial transition to more customer choice. They will reduce the pressure to raise cable rates.

Thank you.