

The FCC should use its regulatory function to encourage diversity and competition among providers of media services. I am not in position to judge the individual performance of Time Warner or Comcast, but I have experienced first hand what another cable giant, Charter Communications, is like for consumers to deal with, and that experience tells me that allowing cable companies to consolidate and grow larger is unhealthy for our pocketbooks and our culture.

Right now where I live in Asheville, NC, Charter is the only cable TV provider. And in my neighborhood, Charter is the only provider of high-speed Internet service of any kind (there is no DSL or wireless available). It abuses its monopoly position by charging higher Internet prices to consumers who choose satellite TV service and don't get cable. If it had competition, it couldn't get away with that.

Charter has raised my rates twice within the last year, with no notice to me. All the sudden, my bill is higher. Their bills have also been inaccurate — I was being double-charged for the modem. They corrected the bill when I complained, but I'm sure many consumers are being overcharged without realizing it.

I am about to switch to satellite TV, and I will get more channels, and more choices, for less money, even considering that I will have to pay Charter \$5 more per month for Internet service when I cut off their TV services. I feel they are gouging consumers because of their monopoly position.

Charter also provides a channel line-up that is dominated by a few giant corporations with very similar tastes & views. While there are multiple news/public affairs channels all owned & run by the Fox, NBC & Time-Warner corporate families, alternative viewpoints and international perspectives are absent -- they're not available on any package at any price. On the other hand, I can get Free Speech TV network and an international news channel on Dish Network.

Please don't reward Charter and similar companies with rule changes that will make them even more powerful, and most likely less responsive to consumer needs and community interests.