

Giant cable companies should not be permitted to grow larger. Further consolidation in the cable industry is a clear violation of horizontal ownership rules that must be re-established to serve the public interest.

The concentration of power and control over distribution of media is a growing problem in this country. Though we have more channels available than ever before, they are under the operation of a handful of giant corporations.

If Comcast and Time Warner are allowed to merge with Adelphia, the two companies will control nearly 50 percent of the national market. This level of concentration in the cable industry will lead to higher consumer rates and lower quality service. Further, I want my money to my cable operator to be spent in town and support other businesses who have a tough time with money in the summer because it is a college town, this move will only send that money further away and make these public interest providers less accountable to our town and local officials.

Since passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the “deregulation” of cable, consumers have seen their rates jump an average of 59 percent — with some areas experiencing even more dramatic increases.

We are required to buy channels we don't want or need because the cable operators bundle them together. The quality of customer service often reflects the fact that cable television is not a competitive market.

This is especially pertinent to me being a college student and looking to get a couple sports channels to watch our favorite college teams means buying an entire package in which almost all the channels are of no interest to me. Also, the services are being rolled out incredibly slow around me, still no VOD. Over 50% of the city of Pullman's population are college age adults and are overwhelmingly prepared for any new technology. Indeed, the cable companies have not been able to roll it out in any amount of time that keeps are students on top of the current breakthroughs happening in technology, even with the university being one of the most wired in the nation.

Many in my community live in nearby rural towns to keep the price of rent low and are penalized because the cable company has yet to bring them high speed in any reasonable amount of time. This is not just about their profits it is about access to information. When many video and voice services are provided through online outlets as is already beginning to happen they will be left behind and further

disadvantaged when trying to fulfill their duty in our democracy.

Cable companies have become less responsive to the needs and requirements of communities. The quality of public accountability in local franchise agreements has declined, as big companies leverage their power to squeeze local governments.

In many communities, the truly independent sources of local news, information and culture come from the public channels produced at the local access centers. Unfortunately, local channels lack the resources to produce the programming that citizens want and need.

The last thing we need is to reward the anti-competitive actions of cable giants by permitting greater consolidation in ownership, reducing competition, and encouraging more of the same.

My town receives our news from Spokane 90 miles north and after checking with the FOX affiliate up there, they don't have any dedicated Pullman reporter and said they "cover Pullman news as it arises". What is that? I want real news, about the culture, local events, city council, law enforcement, community status, new and potential city services. The cable and local news I receive are far from adequate and do not deserve the airwaves and cables I subsidised. I want this information and have no where to turn to on television to get it. This consolidation will only continue this trend. I want to see my community, Pullman flourish and have diverse debate on a wide range of issues but this will not happen with Adelphia handling our cable nor Comcast, we need someone with local ties who understands the growth and changes our town continues to go through.

As a proud citizen of the United States, I urge you not to allow this merger to go through, as I believe it is counter to the ideals of our nation.