

I urge you to support H.R. 5919, the Family Choice Act, which would give me more control over the channels I watch and help lower the cost of my cable service.

I am sick and tired of ever-rising cable and satellite rates and being forced to pay for costly and bloated all-or-nothing packages of cable channels, when I watch only a few of them. Over the past ten years, the average price of expanded basic cable service has increased from just over \$20 to well over \$40 nearly two and half times the rate of inflation. Today, 98% of consumers can choose from only one cable company and not everyone can get satellite. This lack of competition has hurt consumers and allowed the industry to force us to buy large packages of channels we don't watch.

The Federal Communications Commission's "Further Report on the Packaging and Sale of Video Programming Services to the Public" said that allowing consumers to pick and pay for only the channels they want to watch could save consumers money. Cable and satellite companies should adopt this 'a la carte' system, and give me more control over what programs come into my home.

Consumers should have more flexibility when it comes to the programming we pay for. Today, the cable and satellite companies, not consumers, decide what packages of channels we have to buy. Because of this system, they're able to favor the channels they own and exclude other channels that might compete with their own. Giving me the option of choosing a package or selecting individual channels would help break the choke hold cable and satellite companies have on programming, and offer me more programming that I actually want to watch. This 'a la carte' system would not only save me money, it would also prevent me from paying for programming I don't want or might even find offensive.

H.R. 5919, The Family Choice Act, encourages cable providers to offer me the option of "opting out" of cable channels I don't want and to discount my cable bill accordingly. It also encourages cable companies to offer smaller "themed" packages of programming so that I can select the types of programming I really want to see or that I decide is most appropriate for my family. I urge your support of this important legislation.

In addition, the Federal Communications Commission should use its full authority under Section 628(g) of the Communications Act of 1934 to urge more choice, diversity and competition among cable and satellite companies.

Technology already exists to make a cable and satellite 'a la carte' system work. While the cable industry is fighting this idea, giving consumers choices is the way free-markets are supposed to work. For example, when I subscribe to a magazine, I'm not forced to buy a dozen others offered by the same publisher just to get the one I want. But all-or-nothing cable packages lets cable companies squeeze consumers, drive up costs and control content. They have no incentive to quit unless policymakers step in and get involved.

Thank you for working to give me more control over the programming and cost of cable and satellite.