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November 20, 2009

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

1906

Re: Petitions for Declaratory Ruling Regarding Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Access Channels, MB Docket No. 09-13, CSR-8126, CRS-8127, and CSR-8128.

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

On March 6, 2009, I filed comments urging the FCC to grant the above- referenced Petitions to prevent industry practices that impair the accessibility and functionality of PEG channels. An expedited decision on this matter will safeguard PEG channels and uphold the goals of encouraging localism and diversity in media.

In Illinois, AT&T is rolling out a system that deprives PEG channels of basic functionality afforded commercial channels on its U-Verse system. AT&T's plan for PEG goes in the opposite direction of goals embracing media solutions that meaningfully serve all sectors of society. A recent Digital Excellence study conducted in Chicago found 40% of the population in Chicago remains unconnected or less connected to the Internet. PEG channels on the cable system help bridge that gap, and serve a unique function in the 9th Congressional District, including:

- The creation of programming at Evanston Community Media Center for television and the Internet by over 100 volunteer members and organizations such as NAACP and League of Women Voters.
- Emergency alerts and information on the City of Des Plaines PEG channel, which devotes its channel to public safety information during emergencies like the flooding of the Des Plaines river this past year.
- Digital literacy training, equipment and facility use for thousands of residents and nonprofit groups that use CAN TV in Chicago to address health care, immigration issues, job opportunities, arts initiatives, and civic engagement.
- Educational programming provided by Loyola University, Oakton Community College, Chicago Public Schools and other institutions.

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If the FCC fails to prevent the industry practices at issue in these petitions, other operators might also adopt approaches that marginalize or effectively eliminate PEG access. I urge the FCC to grant the PEG Petitions as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Rep. Jan Schakowsky

Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Michael Copps
The Honorable Robert McDowell
The Honorable Mignon Clyburn
The Honorable Meredith Atwell Baker