



INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE & TELECOMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE

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*** * * PRESS STATEMENT * * ***

ITTA ENCOURAGES CONGRESS TO KEEP ALL OPTIONS OPEN ON STELA REAUTHORIZATION

(Washington) In response to recent statements by House Communications and Technology Subcommittee Chairman Greg Walden expressing his preference for clean passage of the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act (STELA), the following statement was released today by the Independent Telephone & Telecommunications Alliance and may be attributed to Genevieve Morelli, President of ITTA:

“Congress must reauthorize the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act (STELA) by December 31, 2014 so that satellite companies may continue to retransmit local broadcast stations to their customers. ITTA encourages Congress to use the STELA reauthorization process as an opportunity to fully examine the current video services marketplace and update specific outdated provisions of the 1992 Cable Act.

The video services marketplace in 2013 is far different from the market that existed in 1992. Today, consumers receive video content from cable companies, satellite providers, “over-the-top” streaming and, increasingly, from ITTA members and other new entrant IPTV providers. But despite the increase in competitors and video delivery platforms, consumer prices are on the rise. Each year, unbalanced retransmission consent negotiations increasingly subject consumers to possible blackout situations. Most of the resulting agreements are forced on video service providers by broadcasters who maintain all of the negotiating leverage which represents a fundamental market failure. Ultimately, the result is higher video rates to consumers that are necessary to cover the significant increases in retransmission consent fees imposed by broadcasters.

ITTA is encouraged that the House Communications and Technology Subcommittee held a hearing on February 13, 2013 to examine the reauthorization of STELA and ITTA welcomes additional hearings on video and retransmission consent issues, including the video services hearing scheduled before the Subcommittee in early June. However, if Congress is interested in lowering the price of video services for consumers while preserving competition, ITTA calls on Subcommittee Chairman Walden and other leaders in the House of Representatives and the Senate to use any and all opportunities, including the STELA reauthorization process, to legislate policy that will reflect today’s video technology and marketplace.”

ITTA represents mid-size communications companies that provide a broad range of high quality wireline and wireless voice, broadband, Internet, and video services in 44 states. For more information, please visit www.itta.us.

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