



Supporting Community Media

Keeping Arts and Culture Programming on Local TV

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to:

- **Co-sponsor and support the Community Access Preservation Act (the CAP Act, S.1789 in the 113th Congress) or other legislation that would accomplish similar goals to preserve public, educational, and governmental (PEG) access television channels for local communities.**

BACKGROUND

Community media is composed of public, educational, and governmental (PEG) access television channels and community radio stations. Community media has a long history of presenting local, regional, and national nonprofit arts programming, a great majority of which is not available on commercial channels and which reflects local needs. Such channels and stations are enabled by federal legislation and play a unique role in bringing information and arts programming to the American public.

Congress recognized the need for non-commercial local and neighborhood-based media outlets when it passed the Local Community Radio Act in 2010. As the House and Senate contemplate telecommunications reform in the current Congress, we encourage similar consideration of the proposals offered in the past by Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Ed Markey (D-MA) on how to preserve and strengthen PEG access television.

Historically, PEG access organizations received support from cable companies through fees paid to municipalities or their designees. In many communities, community media outlets are the sole source for local news, political debate, religious expression, and cultural arts programming. These organizations also provide critical media arts and media literacy training not available elsewhere. PEG channels reach large segments of the population often under-served by commercial media that show programming created for national or international audiences. Sustaining these noncommercial local media outlets is critical for coverage of the nonprofit arts and culture community.

TALKING POINTS

- In 2007, the FCC ruled that in many cases, part of the fees paid by cable operators in support of PEG access television would be restricted only to facilities and equipment—and not for operating expenses (such as salaries). As a result, PEG facilities in a number of communities have closed. We are asking Congress to amend the Cable Act to ensure that PEG fees can be used for *any* PEG-related purpose, including arts and culture programming and media arts training. The U.S. Conference of Mayors and the California legislature have endorsed this federal action.
- We urge support for a requirement that cable operators deliver PEG channels to all subscribers via channels whose quality, accessibility, functionality, and placement is equivalent to local commercial television stations. These channels are invaluable assets in their communities, providing local nonprofit arts programs reflecting each community's unique character. In townships and rural areas, PEG channels provide the only media coverage of local arts performances and local cultural events.
- Examples of community PEG access arts programming include:
 - "Evening on Broadway," Dakota Media Access, Bismarck, ND
 - "That Art Show" and "The Friday Extra Concert Series," CCTV, Tampa, FL

- “Fairy Tale Access,” Access Nashua, Nashua NH
- “About Towne,” Irving Community Television Network, Irving, TX
- “Bloomfield Civic Band and Choir Holiday Concert,” WBMA-TV, Bloomfield Twp., NJ
- “Chayag - Andean Folk Music & Dance,” CCTV, Salem, OR
- “Kenosha Symphony Orchestra: Symphonic Sweets,” Kenosha Community Media, Kenosha, WI
- “2014 Capital Jazz Fest,” Columbia Access Television, Columbia, MO
- “Simley Dance Extravaganza,” Town Square TV, Inver Grove Hts., MN
- “Art Talks,” WHCTV, West Hartford, CT
- “Cambridge Uncovered: Central Square Cultural Arts District,” CCTV, Cambridge, MA