



Department of Communications

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December 11, 2013

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to ask for your support of S. 1789, the "Community Access Preservation Act," (the CAP Act) to preserve and protect public, educational, and government community access cable television channels ("PEG channels"). This bill, S. 1789, is co-sponsored by Senators Tammy Baldwin and Edward Markey.

This bill will help preserve Public, Educational and Government (PEG) channels by providing reliable funding for these channels. PEG channels are local channels used by religious organizations, schools, local government and community organizations which offer free or low cost outlets for public service, informational and religious programming. These channels increase the diversity of voices on our airwaves, promote broader civic engagement in local governmental process and provide an avenue for noncommercial religious programming. In a time when religious programming faces increasing challenges to its voice being given an equal platform, PEG channels offer a venue for these programs to be accessed. This is of particular importance for the elderly, disabled or homebound who long to remain connected to their religious communities but are unable to take part in their religious or community activities.

Now, in many states, PEG channels are disappearing as a result of the passage of new state cable laws which failed to include funding of PEG channels by cable operators. The loss of funding for these channels has significantly reduced the "video equivalent of the speaker's soap box" which the legislative history of the PEG provisions of the 1984 Cable Act sought to create with PEG channels.

I encourage you to support these local channels and the local programming they carry by supporting S. 1789. Please know of my gratitude for the extraordinary public service work you do for our nation.

Sincerely,

+ *John C. Wester*

Most Reverence John C. Wester
Bishop of Salt Lake City
Chairman
USCCB Communications Committee