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U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Washington, DC 20515-6115

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May 15, 2006

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**SUPPORT THE BARTON-RUSH BILL, H.R. 5252**

*(The Communications Opportunity, Promotion, and Enhancement Act of 2006)*

**TO BRING CHOICE, COMPETITION TO TELEVISION AND THE INTERNET**

BUD ALBRIGHT, STAFF DIRECTOR

Dear Colleague:

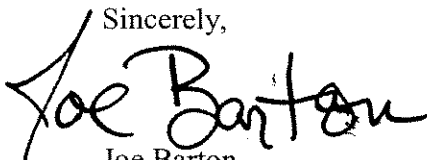
We are writing today to ask for your support in bringing choice and competition to television and the Internet. Outdated government regulations are stifling competition and propping up prices. Local telephone companies now have the ability to offer a pay TV service that is similar to, and will compete with, cable TV. But, in order to do so, competitors to cable must reach time-consuming "franchise agreements" with tens of thousands of jurisdictions. One company official testified that if AT&T signed a franchise agreement every day, it would take more than seven years to complete its deployment plan. We must clear the roadblocks on the information superhighway.

We ask you to join us in supporting the Communications Opportunity, Promotion, and Enhancement Act of 2006 (COPE), which will benefit consumers as prices decrease and innovation increases. The COPE Act will:

- ✓ Bring more choices, lower prices, and better video services by creating a single, national approval process that will speed entry of competitors;
- ✓ Bring faster broadband in more places, especially in rural areas by boosting deployment of high-speed broadband as telephone providers upgrade their networks to offer video service;
- ✓ Bring more jobs and make U.S. more competitive in the global economy when telephone companies make new investments in advanced networks;
- ✓ Preserve net neutrality by allowing the Federal Communications Commission explicit power to go after companies that violate network neutrality principles;
- ✓ Preserve protections for cities and counties to retain authority over rights-of-way, and still receive a five-percent franchise fee and an additional one percent for infrastructure maintenance and public access channels;

When the COPE Act comes to the floor for debate, we hope you remember that competition at all levels is good for both consumers and the market. We hope that you will join us in supporting the COPE Act.

Sincerely,

  
Joe Barton  
Member of Congress

  
Bobby Rush  
Member of Congress