

SERVING

the Lehigh Valley
(Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton)
and Wilkes-Barre in PA and
Hunterdon County in NJ

FOR OVER 70 YEARS.

Offering the Latest in State-of-the-art:



Available with our TiVo DVR at no additional fee.



TiVo with Voice Activated Remote, record 6 shows at once and 150 hours of HD programming.



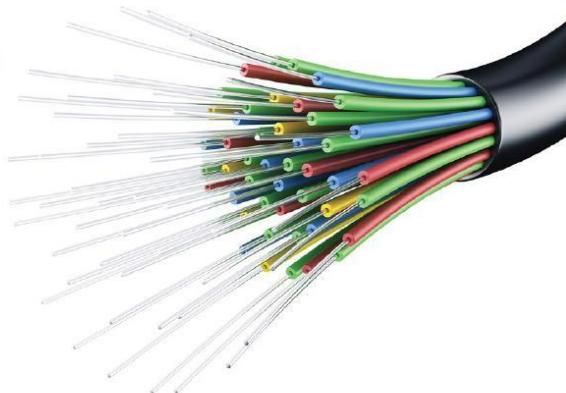
Fast, reliable internet.



Speeds up to 1 Gig.



The most HD channels on cable in the area.



Telephone

Unlimited calling with 25 free features.



TV2

The Leader in Local Sports.

The name that launched an industry.



610-865-9100

SECTV.COM

CABLE TV & COMMUNICATIONS



NewsClips

February 25, 2021

[The Verge](#)

[Verizon and AT&T just spent almost \\$70 billion on spectrum to improve their 5G networks](#)

[Next TV](#)

[Disney, WarnerMedia, Discovery, et al. Fixate on Subscriber Counts, But the Bottom Line Begins to Toll](#)

[Reuters](#)

[Google pledges changes to research oversight after internal revolt](#)

[Spotlight PA](#)

[Counties will again be unable to process mail ballots](#)

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit has upheld a district court's injunction against Maine's cable à la carte law, concluding that the lower court did not abuse its discretion in granting the preliminary injunction. In 2019, Maine passed a law requiring cable operators, but not other video distributors, to offer every channel and program à la carte, rather than bundled in a channel or tier of channels. They would have to buy the basic package before having the à la carte option for other channels and programs.

Comcast, A&E, C-SPAN, Discovery, Disney, Fox Cable, NBCU, Viacom and New England Sports Network sued Maine's governor, attorney general and various cities and towns in district court arguing the law was unconstitutional since it singled out cable speech for regulation, but not satellite or online video distributors, and was preempted by the Communications Act. They then sought a preliminary injunction to block the bill's implementation while the legal challenge was heard.

The bar for an injunction is high--four different factors must be met: 1) probability of success, 2) irreparable harm to the plaintiff if the injunction is not granted, 3) the balance of harms if the injunction is not granted tilts toward the plaintiff, and 4) it serves the public interest. The district court concluded that it was a speech regulation that requires heightened scrutiny, another high bar and one that Maine conceded its evidence did not clear. The district court granted the injunction, saying that while the law did not impinge on cable operators' editorial discretion, it did single them out for disparate treatment.

The appeals court agreed that the law implicated speech and, given Maine's concession, it affirmed the district court injunction. The appeals court said the

[early during Pa.'s primary election](#)

Associated Press
[Pennsylvania's new congressional and legislative maps may come too late for the 2022 primary](#)

Philadelphia Inquirer
[Pa. Republicans met Wednesday night to censure Pat Toomey, but came away with nothing](#)

Allentown Morning Call
[Charlie Dent on a new center-right party: 'There's clearly a demand out there'](#)

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
[Editorial: Mail voting withheld challenges](#)

district court can now decode which level of heightened constitutional scrutiny applies, whether the state can offer "post-enactment" evidence to support the law, and "even whether, on a more fulsome record, the state law is preempted." On the current record the district court concluded it was not preempted. The appeals court also said it was leaving open the question of whether the law would trigger "singling out" concerns if it applied to satellite and internet-based distributors, saying a fair reading of the law is that the broader the scope of a regulation, the less likely it will raise First Amendment concerns. – **Next TV**

Republican leaders of Pennsylvania's legislature said Wednesday that Gov. Tom Wolf's administration is trying to sabotage ballot questions to amend the constitution to shift authority over the length of emergency declarations from governors to lawmakers. The measures arose from Republican lawmakers' strident disagreement with how Wolf, a Democrat, has handled the coronavirus pandemic.

In a news conference, Republican lawmakers said Wolf's administration purposely wrote the questions with wording designed to scare voters into rejecting them. "We respect the voters, we think they'll see through it, they'll understand it and we hope to do our best to educate them on it," said Senate President Pro Tempore Jake Corman (R., Centre.). Wolf's office said the wording in the ballot questions "fairly, accurately and clearly apprise the voter of the issue to be voted on."

The Republican-controlled legislature approved the proposals heading to the ballot. Wolf opposes them, but governors have no power to prevent proposals to amend the constitution from going on the ballot for voters to consider. Courts have nearly unanimously backed Wolf's use of emergency powers to impose social-distancing restrictions, close buildings or limit business activity during the pandemic. Wolf's administration maintains that the proposed amendments will not affect those powers because they rest on the state's Disease Prevention and Control Act. The questions are scheduled to appear on Pennsylvania's May 18 primary ballot. – **Associated Press**

The good news is Pennsylvania no longer sits among the bottom-dwelling states in vaccinating people against COVID-19. The bad news is Pennsylvania is still Pennsylvania. This means that even at its best and no matter the issue, it's hanging around or just below the middle of states.

This week, for example, [28 states have vaccinated higher percentages of their populations](#). But there used to be 38. So, we're making progress in climbing toward mediocrity. Meanwhile, Gov. Tom Wolf chants his mantra: "We need to do better." You'll be happy to know he's tapped a bipartisan legislative task force to work on the problem. And just hired an international management firm, the Boston Consulting Group, you know, to manage things. The contract runs from now to August. The estimated cost is \$11.5 million.

And, yeah, it's like saying, "Look, we have no idea what we're doing, let's pay somebody else to do it." But it seems to be a popular move. [New York state](#) hired the same firm to work on vaccine plans; [Connecticut](#) hired the firm last May, for \$2 million, to help its reopening efforts; [Rhode Island](#) contracted the firm for \$1.85 million worth of COVID-related assistance.

So, Pennsylvania's boldly going where other states have gone before – just in a bigger way. This new aggressiveness comes after a befuddled, patchwork of rollout efforts that frustrated countless folks who fruitlessly sought vaccine appointments online or by phone, only to come up empty over and over again. Then came admission of a colossal screwup related to second-dose Moderna vaccines (as in there isn't enough), forcing maybe [100,000 Pennsylvanians to delay and reschedule second shots](#). The Health Department reported the goof, which had been playing out for weeks, as basically nobody's fault. This even though the department first urged vaccine

providers to use second-dose allotments for first-shots, then said providers erred in doing so.

Go on, shake your head. Or find comfort in the inspiring words of Wolf on the day the screw-up was revealed: "We will look for ways and find ways to make the system even better." No wonder we need a global consultant. Now, our sole self-proclaimed independent state lawmaker (in a state in need of many more independents) is pushing a bill to create a vaccine czar.

Sen. John Yudichak, of Luzerne County, said in a statement that former Health Secretary Rachel Levine (currently with the Biden Administration) left the state last month "with no coherent plan in place" to get vaccines to citizens. He said the Health Department has created confusion and doubt, that Wolf's task force is six months too late, and we need a "logistics czar" to manage private-sector experts in vaccine distribution. "Folks should be outraged that eight weeks after we get the vaccine from the federal government, we create a legislative task force to figure out how to get it to people," Yudichak tells me.

Indeed. And maybe \$11.5 million buys us better days. But, as I've noted in past, everyone, everywhere knew a vaccine was coming. Anyone with a semblance of sense knew distribution meant giant challenges. And planning, task forces and vaccine czars should have been in place last summer. It's almost as if those in charge, politicians and their minions, were preoccupied with something else.

Campaign 2020? Paring down the governor's emergency powers? Debating COVID restrictions? Partisan politics? Re-impeaching an impeached ex-president? But that can't be. That would be morally repugnant, right? So, we blame the feds in general, anonymous providers, the supply chain, the weather, the scope of the problem, anything or anyone to avoid the truth: government leaders in both parties blew opportunities to build a system to better distribute vaccines.

As a result, any prospect of crisis performance improving public confidence or trust in government was squandered. Now, however, [UPMC is offering registration for vaccine appointments](#). [Penn State Health](#) is opening vaccination centers. And Democratic state lawmakers are pushing [legislation to offer the kind of statewide vaccine registry](#) that the Democratic Wolf administration declined to offer.

So, maybe, at last, there's an awakening. Maybe things are starting to get done. And maybe Pennsylvania can continue its climb – to mediocrity and beyond. – **John Baer's column in Harrisburg Patriot-News**

