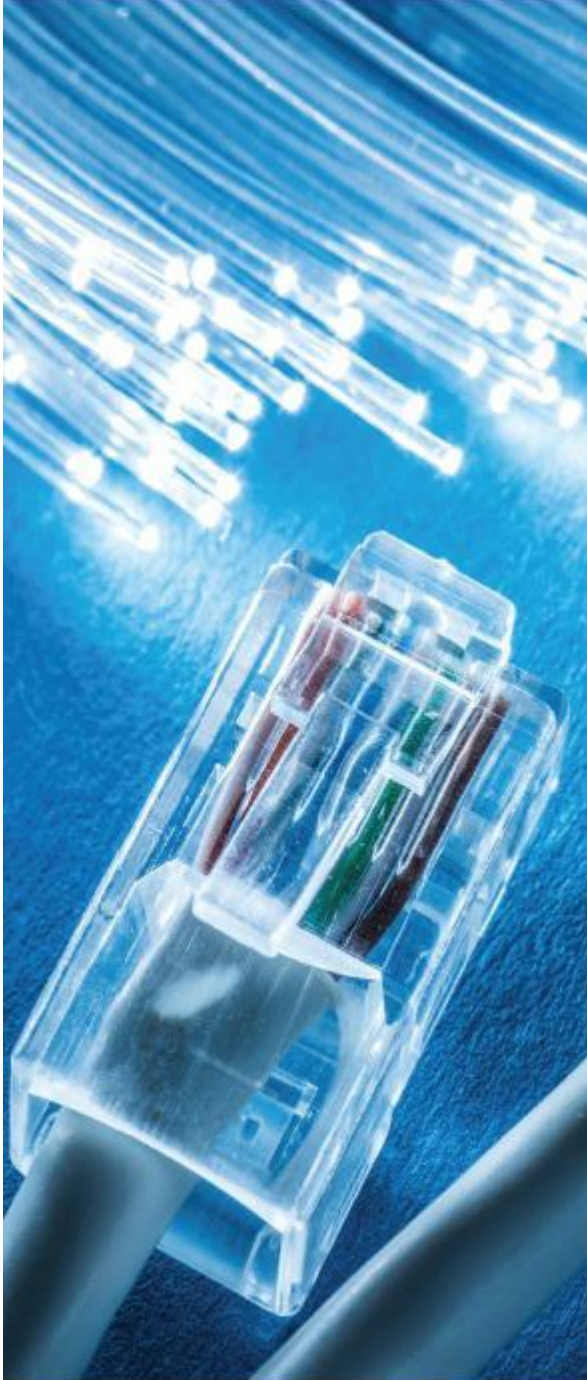


PA Townships **Value Relationship** with Cable Industry



The Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors salutes a longstanding working relationship with BCAP that has benefited millions of our commonwealth's citizens.

PSATS members have had successful partnerships with the commonwealth's cable companies for decades. The result has been a Pennsylvania-born technology that continues to provide entertainment, education, and communications services for generations of our state's citizens and businesses.

If there was ever a template for blending technology providers with local government, our 70-year-old working relationship with BCAP members is it.

PSATS looks forward to continuing and growing its partnership with broadband cable companies in the years ahead to deliver services to ALL Pennsylvanians!



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of Township Supervisors**

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**WESA-FM,
Pittsburgh
Google Contract
Workers In
Pittsburgh Formed A
Union Over A Year
Ago. They Still Don't
Have A Labor
Contract**

**Next TV
NCTA's Powell:
Cable Scores with
OTT as Well as
Traditional Video**

**LightReading
Cable ops to be
'surgical' with latest
Wi-Fi tech**

**TVNewsCheck
NBCU To Showcase
New, Scaled
Content, IP
Opportunities At
Upfront**

**Reuters
U.S. House
committee approves
blueprint for Big
Tech crackdown**

**Protocol
For Big Tech
whistleblowers,
there's no such
thing as 'moving on'**

**Next TV
Nielsen Streaming:
The Great Pandemic
Content Drought
Has Arrived**

**Variety
Amazon Spent \$11
Billion on Prime
Video and Music
Content in 2020, Up
41%**

The fastest-growing mobile-phone carriers in the U.S. aren't phone companies.

More than five million Americans now pay for mobile-phone service through their cable-TV providers, enticed by low prices and the ability to easily adjust their phone plans, a flexibility that proved particularly useful during the pandemic.

Cable operators such as Comcast Corp. and Charter Communications Inc. joined the wireless sector in recent years with one goal in mind, executives and analysts say: Give their customers another reason not to leave, especially because pay-TV service businesses have been quickly losing subscribers as consumers turn to streaming services and internet-based TV bundles for entertainment. Now, the companies are looking to generate profits from their mobile businesses. "I think we're real, right?" Comcast Finance Chief Mike Cavanagh said of the company's Xfinity Mobile unit during a recent conference, adding that the business would be profitable this year. "I think there's no one that doubts that anymore."

Comcast on Thursday introduced a new slate of mobile plans in a push to undercut traditional wireless companies. Those companies remain dominant, with nearly 50 times as many mobile-phone subscribers as their cable counterparts at the end of 2020. The rise of cable companies isn't yet a direct threat to wireless carriers, which get paid to provide access to their infrastructure. Comcast and Charter rely on Verizon Communications Inc.'s network, while Altice USA Inc. has a deal with T-Mobile US Inc.

Brooklyn resident Uchendu Nwachuku said he switched from AT&T to Charter's Spectrum Mobile about two years ago and now pays \$45 a month for unlimited data, compared with \$120 previously for two lines with AT&T. He said the price difference was "the big motivator" behind his decision.

Cable executives say they can keep their costs in check because mobile-phone users increasingly rely on Wi-Fi—a medium that cable companies control—rather than on cellular networks. Charter Chief Executive Tom Rutledge recently said 80% of all U.S. mobile traffic was on Wi-Fi. Meanwhile, data collected by market researcher Opensignal show that the average U.S. mobile user was connected to a Wi-Fi network about 60% of the time.

Where Wi-Fi isn't available, cable companies rely on the big cellphone-network operators to connect their users on the move. "They are an important enterprise customer for us," Verizon CEO Hans Vestberg said of cable operators in December. "If they take share, ultimately we take share." Cable's push into the wireless business didn't happen overnight. Companies have been looking for a way into the industry for nearly two decades and have made various attempts that failed to gain traction.

Some users of all three cable operators interviewed by The Wall Street Journal say they experience little-to-no difference in the quality of service, especially during the pandemic when they left the house infrequently and mostly relied on home broadband. Cory Simpson of Houston, who uses Comcast's Xfinity Mobile, said that pre-pandemic, he remembered having some patchy service while at concerts or sporting events but acknowledged that is a common issue even for traditional wireless providers.

Cable companies tend to offer the greatest savings to customers paying for one or two phone lines. The price gap between cable and phone companies usually starts to disappear around unlimited-data family plans with three or more lines. Comcast said Thursday it will now offer multiline discounts, such as four-line plans for \$120 a month.

Cable companies' mobile-subscriber base has nearly quadrupled over the past two years, while the top wireless carriers gained less than 2% over the same period, according to data from research firm MoffettNathanson LLC. With a combined 5.4 million mobile customers at the end of last year, Comcast,

Charter and Altice USA remain very small compared with Verizon, AT&T Inc. and T-Mobile, which directly serve more than 260 million subscribers. Mobile service accounts for a very small portion of cable operators' top line—between 1% and 3% of their revenue last year, according to public filings.

Comcast and Charter offer mobile service to their customers only, while Altice's wireless plans are available to anyone who lives in an area where Altice operates. During a recent call with analysts, Comcast CEO Brian Roberts said the company's wireless subscribers were less likely to drop their broadband connections. Craig Moffett, a telecom analyst for MoffettNathanson, said cable companies can make their niche wireless services profitable if they build their own infrastructure cost-effectively, relying on partners like Verizon to carry the load in less-populated areas. "The cable operators are in this strategically marvelous position of having to build only where they want to be," Mr. Moffett said.

Comcast and Charter recently bought a swath of radio frequencies known as Citizens Broadband Radio Service, or CBRS, [to serve more users](#) while they aren't on Wi-Fi. The operators have yet to build the cellular infrastructure needed to provide the service on a large scale, though they are testing the technology in certain markets. The CBRS deal is part of the reason Charter and Comcast didn't participate in a recent government-run auction of C-band spectrum for 5G, in which [Verizon secured more than half](#) of the airwaves. Rich DiGeronimo, Charter's chief product and technology officer, said CBRS licenses fit better with Charter's footprint.

Both Comcast and Charter recently renewed their contracts to run their services over Verizon's network, and each said there are no plans to end the relationship. AT&T has also said it is open to reselling some of its network capacity to other operators but has yet to announce a deal with any cable brands. Comcast entered the mobile industry in 2017, Charter in 2018 and Altice in 2019. All three operators offer a flat rate for unlimited internet data usage—in the ballpark of \$45—or an option that lets the customer pay per gigabyte of internet used in the month. They also let customers switch between unlimited and by-the-gig plans during a single pay cycle, a move traditional phone companies discourage. Mr. Simpson, the Xfinity Mobile user, said he sometimes changes his service monthly, depending on what makes the most sense based on his usage that month. Mr. Simpson said he typically pays only \$14 a month because he uses less than one gigabyte and relies mostly on his home Wi-Fi. — **Wall Street Journal**

Pennsylvania lawmakers once again must decide whether to take the cellphones out of drivers' hands.

A bill to do just that could see action in Harrisburg soon. Conceived by Monroe County Rep. Rosemary Brown, it would ban the use of handheld devices by drivers and make violations a "primary offense" — meaning police could make a traffic stop based on seeing the violation.

"The purpose of this legislation is not to penalize drivers," said Brown, a Republican, "but to protect innocent drivers, similar to our driving under the influence laws." Statistics paint a grim picture of the toll from distracted driving. According to PennDOT, there were 13,776 distracted driving crashes in 2019, with 62 fatalities. Brown said the numbers are significantly underreported. "That is just the bare, bare minimum of what is actually out there," she said.

Her bill would fine drivers \$100 for holding or supporting — for instance, propping between the shoulder and ear — a cellphone or similar device. Every state that borders Pennsylvania — Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and West Virginia — already has approved a handheld device ban for drivers. Brown has been pushing for a Pennsylvania version for six years, and believes the House might take up her latest bill in May.

One issue it faces is concern about disproportionate numbers of traffic stops of Black drivers. "I have concerns around racial profiling," said Rep. Donna Bullock, a Philadelphia Democrat and chairwoman of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus. "We have to look at how these stops are impacting people of color." Beyond that, when Brown pushed a similar bill last session, some lawmakers said it went too far.

Republican Rep. Doyle Heffley of Carbon County introduced an amendment to make the device-holding offense secondary, meaning police could not pull the driver over simply for holding such a device. The amendment did the same with texting while driving, currently a primary offense. "Many folks are responsible and perfectly capable of holding a phone and holding a conversation and driving a car at the same time," Heffley said. His amendment was approved. In Brown's opinion, it took the punch out of the bill, which ended up getting approved by the House but stalling in the Senate.

Brown said she wants to convince lawmakers the proposed offense must be a primary violation. And, she said, she wants to see if all police departments would be able to collect data on traffic stops, including the race and ethnicity of the drivers who are stopped. Bullock said giving police another reason to pull over Black motorists is a concern. If the handheld-device offense is primary, Bullock said, it would create another cause for police to carry out "pretextual" traffic stops. Other offenses that allow such stops include expired registrations and broken taillights.

Bullock said there is concern those stops produce disproportionately negative outcomes for Black people. Currently, there is no statewide data on race, ethnicity, age, or gender of drivers pulled over for traffic violations. Bullock and Brown have discussed a possible amendment to the bill that would mandate collection by police of that data.

The data challenge is huge. Pennsylvania State Police alone made more than 475,000 traffic stops in the pandemic year of 2020, and about 639,000 in 2019, according to Cpl. Brent Miller. Without a mandate to do so, state police on Jan. 1 began collecting more than 30 different data points on every traffic stop, Miller said. It is to be analyzed by University of Cincinnati researchers to identify potential patterns of racial or ethnic disparities.

Col. Robert Evanchick, state police commissioner, said the researchers might make "make recommendations on changes to PSP policy or training." Brown said her main goal is to create the primary offense, but collecting demographic data on traffic stops is important, too. One challenge will be figuring out how local police can collect the data and where they can send it. Bullock said Massachusetts passed a data-collection law. Early results showed Black drivers got citations, rather than warnings, in disproportionate numbers compared to white drivers, according to Bullock. "It is very important we get this information on Pennsylvania," Bullock said.

On the streets of Allentown, opinions go both ways, but many favor the proposal. "It's dangerous. It's a safety issue," said Elvis Flores, a machine operator who lives in the city. "If you have the cellphone stuck to the dash and you are dialing, that's something else." But Jowell Reyes, an Allentown barber, was concerned police would abuse the potential new reason to pull drivers over. "I don't think I'm for it," Reyes said.

Ron Lacey, a mental health industry worker, said the law should have been passed in Pennsylvania a long time ago. "Especially when the fatalities started piling up," Lacey said. "It's common sense." Carmen Diaz, a stay-at-home mother who lives in Allentown, said, "C'mon, people should be paying attention to the signs on the streets. That's why they are there."

John Herbert, an Orefield electrician, said the dangers are obvious. "I pay attention, driving down the highway. Maybe two or three out of 10 people are looking at their phones, all the time," Herbert said. "Every time I see somebody

doing something stupid, you can tell they are usually on their phone, texting or whatever.”

The list of organizations that support the bill is long and wide-ranging and includes the Pennsylvania School Bus Association, the Ambulance Association of Pennsylvania and the National Safety Council. “Anything we can do to help the public not be distracted as they drive is a good thing,” said Miller of the Pennsylvania State Police, which favors the bill.

Theresa Podguski, director of legislative affairs for AAA East Central, said research backs up the organization’s support of the bill. It found crashes involving teenage drivers and found distracted driving was a factor 58% of the time. Beyond that, Podguski said, research shows the visual, cognitive and physical distractions of an electronic device “makes it an inherently dangerous activity” while driving. The National Motorists Association is on the other side of the fence. President Gary Biller said the 8,000-member organization recognizes the dangers of distracted driving, but believes that when it comes to talking on the cell behind the wheel “there are people who can manage those types of conversations safely.” – *Allentown Morning Call*

The first political ad in Pennsylvania’s 2022 U.S. Senate race isn’t pulling any punches. It hits Lt. Gov. John Fetterman squarely in a sore spot on race. The Collective Super PAC, [founded in 2015](#) to support Black candidates, is airing an ad on the radio stations WDAS-FM in Philadelphia and WAMO-FM in Pittsburgh that calls out Fetterman for a 2013 incident, when the then-Braddock mayor [held a shotgun while detaining a Black man](#) he saw running from what he said he suspected was a nearby shooting.

The man was actually an unarmed jogger, and the incident has exposed a nerve for Fetterman [at the start of his campaign](#) for the Democratic nomination. “What gave John Fetterman the right?” a woman asks in the ad. “The police first surrounded the innocent Black jogger but then let him go and then they let Fetterman go, too. Now John Fetterman is running for U.S. Senate and wants our vote, but it’s time for us to finally hold John Fetterman accountable.”

Quentin James, founder of the Collective, said news that Fetterman, who is white, [had raised nearly \\$4 million](#) since entering the race prompted what he described as a \$100,000 ad buy, which is also playing on audio streaming services. A media buyer told Clout the PAC paid \$45,000 to run the ad on the radio for two weeks. “That, for us, was a huge red flag,” James said of Fetterman’s fund-raising, adding that he is “personally, pretty p—ed off” the lieutenant governor has emerged as the Democratic front-runner. Suggesting how the incident could have turned deadly, he cited the police killings of Black men that have prompted [a national reckoning on race](#). “No one is saying John Fetterman should resign,” James said. “What we’re saying is he doesn’t have to be the U.S. senator from Pennsylvania. This incident can’t just be glossed over. We have other options.”

James said he has spoken about the race with two Black Philadelphians: State Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta, who [is also running for the seat](#), and State Sen. Sharif Street, who is [exploring a run](#). He called them “amazing candidates” “Imagine if Sharif Street or Malcolm Kenyatta held a white man at gunpoint because they thought he might have committed a crime,” James said. “They would not only not be running for Senate right now, they’d probably be in jail.”

The jogger, Christopher Miyares, [in letters to The Inquirer](#), said Fetterman lied about their encounter. But Miyares said that he still wants Fetterman to become a senator and that Fetterman changing his story now could hurt his chances. Fetterman has said he couldn’t tell Miyares’ race at the time because Miyares was wearing cold-weather jogging gear and a face mask.

Asked about the ad, Fetterman’s campaign told Clout he thinks it is “important to acknowledge the outrage and the lived reality of racial profiling” and noted

the 2013 incident happened in an Allegheny County borough with a majority Black population. "But this incident 8 years ago was not profiling, and the facts, circumstances, and greater context of that encounter all support that race played no role," the campaign said.

A [Smart Politics report](#) from the University of Minnesota may explain why the Democrats are getting an early jump in the race for governor. Author Eric Ostermeier found that Pennsylvania Democrats have gone 174 years without winning three gubernatorial races in a row, as 2022 victory would be. That's a national record.

Ostermeier told Clout the race, happening in the middle of President Joe Biden's presidential term, presents "more historical hurdles for the Democrats." Midterm elections favor the party not holding the White House. Ostermeier said the party out of power in the presidency won 19 of the last 21 elections for governor in Pennsylvania. The two exceptions: Dick Thornburgh when Ronald Reagan was president, and Tom Wolf while Barack Obama held the White House. – **Chris Brennan's "Clout" column in *Philadelphia Daily News***

