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Senator David G. Argall (R-Schuylkill/Berks) was named "Friend of the Association" by the Pennsylvania Moving and Storage Associates (PMSA) for his efforts to protect Pennsylvania consumers. At their annual conference in Harrisburg on Oct. 15, the **PMSA recognized Argall** for his efforts in the state legislature to draw attention to illegal household goods movers taking advantage of unaware customers.

Senator Argall is sponsoring a proposal to increase penalties on illegally operating commercial household goods movers. The bill recently received the unanimous support of the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee. Senate Bill 857 would make it a punishable offense to perform an illegal move in the state with a \$5,000 fine and a third degree misdemeanor. Vehicles used in an illegal household goods move would be confiscated and registration would be suspended. Repeat offenders would be subject to a \$10,000 fine.



The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) regulates the industry, ensuring for hire household goods movers carry adequate insurance to protect property being moved and workers compensation for their

employees. Movers are skirting the law by not registering with the PUC. Oftentimes, they do not carry workers compensation or maintain adequate insurance coverage to protect the goods moved. They solicit business over popular websites, including Craigslist and Angie's List. The bill only applies to commercial, for hire entities.

According to Argall, it is cheaper to pay the fine levied by the PUC than it is to comply with the law. "We have a real issue when it is cheaper to pose as a licensed business while operating under the law," Argall said. "Families trust household goods movers with all of their possessions during these moves.

Unfortunately, several outfits across the state pose as legal entities, but are anything but legal. The goal is to get everyone in compliance with the law so consumers and their

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property is protected." All revenue generated by the fines would be used to assist with the PUC's motor carrier enforcement efforts. – **Berksmont News (Pottstown)**

The New York attorney general is probing whether three major Internet providers could be short-changing consumers by charging them for faster broadband speeds and failing to deliver the speeds being advertised, according to documents seen by Reuters.

The letters, which were sent on Friday to executives at Verizon Communications Inc, Cablevision Systems Corp and Time Warner Cable Inc, ask each company to provide copies of all the disclosures they have made to customers, as well as copies of any testing they may have done to study their Internet speeds. "New Yorkers deserve the Internet speeds they pay for. But, it turns out, many of us may be paying for one thing, and getting another," New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said in a statement.

Time Warner Cable spokesman Bobby Amirshahi said in a statement: "We're confident that we provide our customers the speeds and services we promise them and look forward to working with the AG to resolve this matter." Cablevision spokesman Charlie Schueler said the company's Optimum Online service "consistently surpasses advertised broadband speeds, including in FCC and internal tests. We are happy to provide any necessary performance information to the Attorney General as we do to our customers." Verizon declined comment, saying it had not yet seen the letter.

The probe by the attorney general is particularly focused on so-called interconnection arrangements, or contractual deals that Internet service providers strike with other networks for the mutual exchange of data. In the letters, the office says it is concerned that customers paying a premium for higher speeds may be experiencing a disruption in their service thanks to technical problems and business disputes over the interconnection agreements.

A 2014 study by the Measurement Lab Consortium, or M-Lab, found that customers' Internet service tended to suffer at points where their broadband providers connected with long haul Internet traffic carriers including Cogent Communications Group Inc. "Internet service provider interconnection has a substantial impact on consumer Internet performance - sometimes a severely negative impact," the study said, adding that business relationships rather than technical issues were often at the root of the problem.

A spokesman for the attorney general's office said the findings in the 2014 study, coupled with consumer complaints and internal analysis, prompted the inquiry into the Internet speeds. Some of the letters also raise questions about speeds delivered by Time Warner Cable and Cablevision to consumers over "the last mile," a term that refers to the point where a telecommunication chain reaches a retail consumer's devices. – **Reuters**

ESPN has begun removing its videos from YouTube due to rights issues surrounding next week's launch of YouTube's ad-free subscription service, Red. Fans can go to ESPN's own websites for its videos, the sports network said Friday.

The \$10-per-month Red service launching Wednesday combines ad-free viewing with unlimited on-demand music. YouTube has said that creators have to participate in Red to have their videos show on YouTube in the U.S., even on the free ad-supported side. It has said creators behind 99 percent of all content watched on the site have signed on, including ESPN's parent, The Walt Disney Co. Spokeswomen for both ESPN and YouTube on Friday declined to say what legal issues might impede its participation.

Media analyst Laura Martin of Needham & Co. said it is likely that ESPN's pre-existing contracts with cable and satellite companies like Comcast Corp. prevent it from participating in YouTube's subscription plan. "It has to leave YouTube so it doesn't get sued by its pre-existing partners," she said.

ESPN's contracts with pay TV distributors are multi-year deals. Comcast's can't be

renegotiated before expiring around eight years from now, Martin said. "I think YouTube will have to cave if they want ESPN back." On ESPN's main YouTube channel, the most recent videos are now 4 years old, but some specific channels like ESPN First Take have videos that are new as of Friday.

YouTube began sending out new contracts to its creators six months ago to sign new terms that would allow them to participate in new revenue from Red subscriptions. Those that don't participate would have their videos turned to private in the U.S., effectively turning them off for all but the uploader. YouTube is part of Google, a division of the newly created holding company Alphabet Inc. – **Associated Press**

Comcast's board has approved a proposal that would reclassify its shares so that only its Class A common shares remain. The proposal would reclassify all of the cable television operator's Class A special common stock into Class A common stock, subject to shareholder approval. Comcast Corp. said Monday that its board determined the reclassification was in the best interests of the company and its shareholders and would eliminate confusion caused by having two classes of publicly traded stock. The Philadelphia-based company said the move would also improve the trading liquidity of its publicly traded stock. Comcast plans to hold a special meeting of its shareholders to vote on the reclassification. Shareholders of record on Oct. 20 are entitled to vote at the special meeting. Shares of Comcast shed 9 cents to \$61.89 in light premarket trading.

Comcast is offering free calls to Mexico for its phone customers who are concerned about friends or family impacted by Hurricane Patricia. The company on Saturday announced the free service for about 11 million residential and business Xfinity Voice customers. Credits and waived fees will be automatic until further notice, Comcast said. Free texting also is available for customer through the Xfinity Connect app, the company said. The powerful hurricane roared ashore on Mexico's Pacific coast Friday. – **Associated Press, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**



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