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November 16, 2015

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Charter Communications' biggest shareholder, Liberty Media impresario John Malone, said he'll back away from the MSO if that's what's needed for federal regulators to approve its mergers with Time Warner Cable and Bright House Networks. "When my ownership and participation in DirecTV became an antitrust issue, I negotiated an exit for me so that DirecTV could go forward without these issues. So, you know, my phone number is well known," he told CNBC's David Faber.

Merger opponents have complained that Malone's holdings are too expansive across programming and pay-TV -- in addition to Liberty, Malone also has a significant controlling interest in Discovery Networks and Starz. Faber asked if Malone would abandon his stake in Discovery so that Charter could buy TWC and Bright House. "No, but I could exit Charter," he responded. "I mean, why would I exit Discovery when that is a double bind shot, if you want to call it that." Malone added, "If the problem of Charter being able to do this transaction is me, I don't have to be part of Charter's controlling ownership."

Three companies list Malone as chairman: Liberty Media Corp, Liberty Interactive Corp. (owner of QVC) and Liberty Broadband. The latter is Charter's biggest shareholder, controlling nearly 27 percent of shares. Earlier this week, it was reported that the FCC sent queries asking for details about Malone's holdings in media companies including Discovery Networks and Starz, as well as pay-TV companies including Charter, DirecTV and Dish Network. Media analyst Richard Greenfield described the query to *Bloomberg* as "a pretty meaningful request." – *Fierce Cable*; in *Tampa Bay Times*, [Charter ready to close on Bright House Networks](#)

Comcast is going after Netflix and other streaming services in Boston. Comcast announced in July it was developing Stream, a streaming service that would be available to Xfinity Internet customers and, by next year, the app will also be available to landline customers. On Friday, that service launched in Boston and its outlying suburbs in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. Stream costs \$15, and will allow cord cutters who still subscribe to Xfinity to stream live television from major networks, as well as on-demand access to HBO and some other programs. Stream doesn't handle live sports broadcasts.

The first month of Stream is free, and there is no contract. Also competing with Comcast's Stream and Netflix is Sling, which operates just like the cable giant's product. In July, some NBC affiliates in San Francisco, Washington D.C. and New York declined to accept the Sling ads. Comcast-owned NBCUniversal is also experimenting with [a streaming platform called SeeSo](#). For \$3.99, SeeSo users gain

emails also was recipient

Philadelphia Daily News Pa. budget 'framework': Who's happy now?

Editorials of PA's state budget impasse in the Philadelphia Inquirer and Philadelphia Daily News

access to a smattering of NBC comedy series mixed with exclusive original content, including at least 20 original series and standup specials. – ***Philadelphia Business Journal***

Two weeks ago, area voters chose a new mayor for Philadelphia, picked a district attorney in a hard-fought race in Montgomery County, and elected three justices who will sit on our state's Supreme Court. Unfortunately, fewer than 25 percent of registered voters across the state actually cast ballots, according to preliminary figures from the Department of State. That means just a quarter of registered Pennsylvanians made important decisions about our schools, our systems of justice, and our lives that will affect all for years to come. Pennsylvania consistently trails other states in voter turnout and participation. In 2012, the Keystone state ranked 29th in participation. With the 2016 election fast approaching, what can we do to encourage participation in the voting process?

The commonwealth's voting system is strong in many ways, but it does not reflect how people live today. It's time to bring our election system into the 21st century. Tuesday, our organizations will join with other leading nonpartisan voting advocates, election experts, and community organizations from across Pennsylvania to launch a new coalition to educate the public and our representatives in Harrisburg about commonsense updates to our election system that have been tested and proved in many other states. Updating our election system will make it easier and more convenient for Pennsylvanians to vote and ensure all citizens have an equal opportunity to make their voices heard.

For many Pennsylvanians, particularly working people and caregivers, making it to the polls on Election Day can be a challenge. This is especially true for those who work long hours and double shifts, like doctors, nurses, and first responders. To ease these challenges, 33 states allow voters to cast their ballots during an early voting period before Election Day, which often includes opportunities to vote at night and on weekends. Twenty-seven states give voters the option to submit absentee ballots by mail without providing an excuse and three others send mail-in ballots to all voters. These are just two examples of the type of proven updates Pennsylvania should adopt. All voters, even those that never miss an election, would welcome more flexibility and choice in deciding when and how to cast a vote.

For some voters, the current system erects needless barriers to voting. For example, if you move, current law requires you to reregister at your new address at least 30 days before the next election. But amid the stress of moving, many miss this deadline and can't vote, even if they are moving within the same town or city. Same-day registration would allow both new voters and those who need to update their registrations the chance to do so on Election Day. Fourteen states offer this convenience, and it has proved effective at increasing turnout. In 2012, four of the five states with the highest levels of participation offered same-day registration.

Seniors and disabled Pennsylvanians face additional barriers. Currently, voters with long-term mobility issues must slice through a snarl of red tape in order to receive permanent absentee status, including getting a special certificate from their physician. Other seniors and people with disabilities may need assistance and transportation from family, friends, or caregivers to vote. If they can't find help getting to the polls on Election Day, they may not be able to cast a vote. More choice and flexibility would ensure that all Pennsylvanians have an equal opportunity to participate in our democracy.

Because they've been implemented in states across the country, we know that these improvements work, won't be too costly, and will preserve the integrity of our elections. We also know they've received broad bipartisan support and have been introduced in states led by both Democrats and Republicans. Really, they're common

sense.

Earlier this year, the Pennsylvania Department of State added a new online voter registration option to its website. This simple update allowed more than 30,000 people to register securely online with just a few clicks, and there are plans to expand the system. It has received loud and sustained praise from Republicans and Democrats alike and proved there is broad support for updating our election system.

In an era of partisanship in Harrisburg, implementing these straightforward updates to our election system would provide an important opportunity for legislators to show their constituents that they can work together to get things done. We hope that in the next few months we can find legislators willing to work together to modernize and improve the state's election system so that next November, more Pennsylvanians will vote and participate in the democracy that generations of Americans fought to protect.

– *philly.com* op-ed by Karen Buck, executive director of SeniorLAW Center, and Jennifer Clarke, executive director of the Public Interest Law Center.



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