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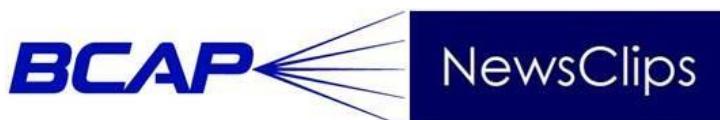
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April 4, 2019

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#### **Variety**

Georgia State lawmakers agreed to give electric cooperatives a shot at providing high-speed internet service in rural Georgia, signing off on a proposal Tuesday after three years of debate. The state's 41 electric membership corporations will be given the authority to provide broadband service, although it remains unclear how many of them will choose to do so. The bill now goes to Gov. Brian Kemp, who has said he backs the idea.

Lawmakers hope freeing the co-ops to sell broadband will increase the chances of connecting parts of rural Georgia, particularly in areas of south and middle Georgia where significant numbers of people lack access. About 1.6 million people across the state likely live without adequate broadband. Other internet proposals, such as a call to tax video streaming and other digital services to help pay for broadband expansion, stalled earlier in the session. "This authorizes one of the main players in rural Georgia to provide a service that they are not legally authorized to provide now," said Rep. Jay Powell, a Republican from Camilla. Powell said there is "no silver bullet for rural broadband" but that the change is another step toward a solution.

**Nexstar Accused of Sabotaging Black-Owned TV Station Group**

**Reuters  
Facebook's Zuckerberg confident of stopping interference in 2020 campaign**

**Los Angeles Times  
Fox News Chief Executive Suzanne Scott keeps her focus on winning**

**Zap2It  
Cable Top 25 for Week Ending March 31**

**Allentown Morning Call  
Fox News holding Bernie Sanders town hall in Bethlehem**

Last year, lawmakers created a framework for a grant program that remains unfunded, and they also started a mapping project meant to pinpoint which parts of the state have the greatest need for the service. Proponents were able to bat away attempts to limit the electric co-ops to serving the most underserved areas of the state. Powell said restricting the co-ops to areas with the weakest broadband coverage may sound good on the surface, but he said such limitations would ultimately be self-defeating. “If you tell a business that the only place that you can serve and the only customers you can serve are the worst of the worst – as far as not having enough density, not being profitable, not being anything – and that you can’t serve in an area that’s profitable, you are basically saying, ‘You can’t get into the business,’” Powell said recently.

Rather, the measure imposes other restrictions meant to keep competition fair with other providers, including guidelines on what the co-ops can now charge other companies to set up equipment on their vast network of poles. This was a major source of contention for traditional providers. The co-ops must also offer internet service through an affiliate, and the money coming from the service cannot mix with revenues from electricity or other services.

Still, some concerns remained as of last week, when the proposal cleared the House somewhat narrowly with a 107-to-62 vote that fell largely along party lines. Establishing the state Public Service Commission, rather than the superior courts, as the venue for complaints against the co-ops helped push the measure through late Tuesday night on the last night of this year’s legislative session. It also easily cleared the Senate earlier in the day.

Rep. Al Williams, a Democrat from a rural district on the coast, was among those who preferred to see the commission handle complaints because the superior court is not seen as approachable to everyone. Williams also questioned why there was no requirement for the co-ops to cater to areas without broadband. Doing so, he said, would be in keeping with the cooperatives’ original purpose: Hooking up electricity in rural communities that companies ignored. “EMCs were born out of that adversity,” said Williams, who voted against an earlier version of the measure but backed it Tuesday night. “Now, everybody wants to cherry pick the easy clusters, thousands of homes.” – *Valdosta (GA) Daily Times*

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Legislation that would allow news publishers to team up on negotiations with tech giants such as Alphabet Inc.’s Google and Facebook Inc. didn’t advance very far in the last Congress. Now, its backers are hoping the latest version, which is expected to be introduced Wednesday, will gain momentum in a Democratic-controlled House and draw bipartisan support.

The Journalism Competition and Preservation Act is sponsored by Rep. David Cicilline (D., R.I.), chairman of the House antitrust subcommittee, and Rep. Doug Collins (R., Ga.). News publishers have struggled to make money on digital ads, partly because of the dominance of Facebook and Google. Antitrust law bars the news companies from working together in negotiations with the tech platforms.

The bill would give publishers a 48-month safe harbor from those rules, during which they would be free to work together to push their case on

issues from revenue splits to data-sharing to content-licensing. Mr. Cicilline said the urgency for such a measure was increasing. “Local media and local publishers are really on life support,” he said, pointing to news-industry data showing that publishers have lost more than \$30 billion in ad revenue since 2006 while Facebook and Google made more than \$60 billion in ad revenue just last year alone. “You can see that because of their dominance in the marketplace, they are generating most of the revenue.”

People familiar with Facebook’s thinking say that an antitrust exemption for publishers would likely harm consumers and fail to help solve the business model problems that it is intending to help fix. A spokesman from Google declined to comment. A spokeswoman for the Computer and Communications Industry Association, a tech-industry advocacy group, said the association was waiting until the bill is introduced to comment.

The legislation would have to clear many hurdles on Capitol Hill before becoming law; there is now no companion bill in the Senate. Mr. Cicilline said he and Mr. Collins intend to hold hearings about the plight of news publishers. Some Senate Republicans have indicated support for measures pushing back on the tech giants. Last month, Texas Republican Sen. Ted Cruz retweeted a complaint from Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D., Mass.) that Facebook had too much power over speech, saying, “She’s right.”

In January, Missouri Republican Sen. Josh Hawley said he would be open to working with Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D., N.Y.) to investigate the power of big tech companies. Mr. Collins, the ranking Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, said rural communities had been particularly hard-hit by challenges to news publishers’ business model. He emphasized that his goal wasn’t “popping up a failed business model,” but rather providing “a level playing field so they can negotiate with these much larger essentially new companies that are causing an advertising drain.”

David Chavern, the president of the News Media Alliance, the publishers advocacy group, said the bill could hold bipartisan appeal because it is “actually a fairly low-touch way” of striking back at the tech companies, in contrast to proposals from figures such as Ms. Warren, a Democratic presidential candidate, who advocate breaking up the tech companies altogether. Dow Jones, the publisher of The Wall Street Journal, is a member of the NMA.

Mr. Collins said he didn’t support breaking up the tech companies, adding, “Simply being big is not bad.” Several publishers threw their support behind the bill. “I do think that no single news company has the scale to negotiate with most of the platforms,” said Neil Patel, publisher of The Daily Caller website, adding that the bill would “allow for business model innovation between publishers and platforms, which is something that’s been missing.”

Josh Tyrangiel, a Vice Media executive who has held senior posts at Bloomberg and Time magazine, said he had watched the power in the industry steadily drift toward the platforms. “If we don’t start being serious, there won’t be small publishers left,” he said. Grant Moise, the publisher of the Dallas Morning News, said metro papers like his were among the hardest hit by the financial challenges, in part because the

platforms' control of user data has made it harder for publishers to sell ads and sign up digital subscribers. "They have the data," he said. "When readers are coming to us through the platforms, our inability to directly market to them makes it extremely challenging to the business." – *Wall Street Journal*

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T-Mobile US Inc. struck a deal to offer Viacom Inc. channels to its cellphone customers, extending the telecom operator's foray into a turbulent pay-television industry. The No. 3 wireless carrier by subscribers said its Layer3 TV service reached a "significant content distribution agreement" with Viacom, owner of cable channels MTV, Nickelodeon and Comedy Central. The companies didn't detail the terms of the arrangement or timing of the new offerings, which will include live channel feeds and on-demand content.

T-Mobile paid \$325 million last year for Layer3 TV, a company that offered cable-like video service to residential customers. The carrier expanded its footprint to some households in four cities but pledged to use the new company for a more ambitious product that would give its cellphone customers more entertainment on the go. T-Mobile executives initially planned to launch the new video service late last year but pushed back its debut to the first half of 2019 to negotiate carriage rights and improve the product. The company said Wednesday that the Viacom agreement "will play a key role in T-Mobile's delivery of compelling new mobile video services to consumers later this year."

The company hasn't detailed how much its planned service would cost and which shows, if any, would be available to cellphone subscribers free of charge. The agreement comes as T-Mobile seeks federal and state officials' approval for a more than \$26 billion acquisition of rival Sprint Corp. The merger, which would leave the country with three nationwide cellphone carriers, is under review. T-Mobile struck a separate deal in 2017 with Netflix Inc. to offer the streaming video service on demand to family-plan customers. That move burdened the company with added costs but helped it attract and keep more cellphone customers, the company said.

Providing real-time TV channels is a trickier business. Cable and satellite-TV programmers often strike complex deals with distributors and are reluctant to let their partners break up profitable channel bundles by offering video a la carte. T-Mobile executives haven't explained their pay-TV plans but have promised their offering will be different. "We think there's a more nuanced role for us to play in helping you get access to the great media brands out there that you love, and to be able to put together your own media subscription in smaller pieces, \$5, \$6, \$7, \$8 at a time," T-Mobile operating chief Mike Sievert said in a February conference call with analysts. – *Wall Street Journal*



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