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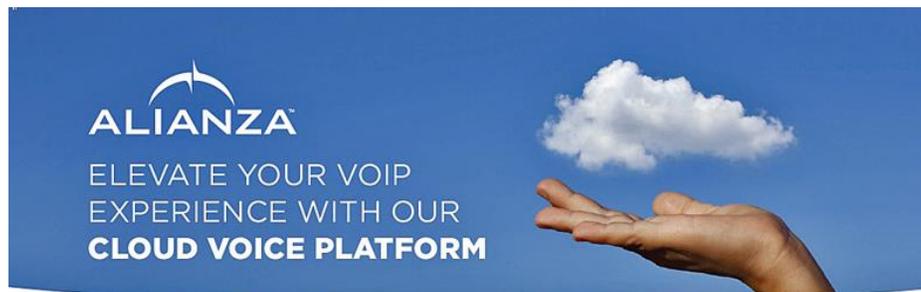
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Chattanooga, Tennessee-based municipal broadband provider EPB, regional cable operators Armstrong, Consolidated and RCN, and Google Fiber scored highest in customer satisfaction in a survey of 210,000 pay-TV subscribers conducted by *Consumer Reports*. *Consumer Reports'* survey also found that 80% of respondents think ISPs should get customer permission before sharing their data. The publication

found that 60% think it shouldn't be shared at all. Also notable: 67% of respondents support net neutrality, indicating that telecom companies shouldn't be able to block rivals. – **Fierce Cable**

Nearly three months after Congress [struck down federal regulations](#) that aimed to protect internet users from having their online activities secretly tracked and sold, California state lawmakers are unveiling new legislation that would require companies to follow such rules.

The proposed rules — amended into an obscure bill about video arcades — would prevent broadband providers such as Comcast and AT&T from collecting or selling certain personal information unless customers “opt in” to policies, among other requirements. The move — which is sure to be fought by the internet giants — is the latest example of the California “Resistance” to Washington policies under the Trump administration, which now spans issues from immigration to environmental regulation to recreational marijuana. “It’s based on a simple demand of the people: Ask me first before you use or share my personal information,” said Richard Holober, executive director of the Consumer Federation of California, at a news conference Monday.

The legislation, unveiled Monday morning by Assemblyman Ed Chau, D-Monterey Park, was prompted by an outcry from consumer-privacy groups and others over the decision to repeal Obama-era regulations from the Federal Communications Commission. A large coalition of civil rights and consumer organizations is backing the bill, including the American Civil Liberties Union, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Common Sense Kids Action and the Consumer Federation of America.

A spokeswoman for Comcast declined to comment on the legislation, but pointed to a blog post on consumer privacy by the company’s chief privacy officer, Gerard Lewis — which was written in late March, as the federal rules were being repealed. “We do not sell our broadband customers’ individual web browsing history,” Lewis wrote. “We did not do it before the FCC’s rules were adopted, and we have no plans to do so.”

The bill was announced as another debate rages nationally among many of the same players over Obama-era policies governing “net neutrality” — the idea that internet providers must give users access to all websites and apps, without blocking some or favoring others. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, on Monday urged FCC Chairman Ajit Pai not to unravel those regulations, as he has proposed. Pai has argued the current approach is “heavy handed.”

everyone the  
chance to vote

In her letter to the chairman, Pelosi also invited him to hold a public hearing in San Francisco — “home to many people building apps, web services and internet-connected devices used locally and around the world.” Chau’s Assembly Bill 375 was written to mirror repealed federal regulations restricting the use of a broadband customer’s personal information, such as online browsing history. As with the repealed federal rules, the state bill’s provisions would not apply to companies like Google and Facebook, which broadband providers have argued is unfair.

But consumer-privacy groups counter that broadband internet is like a utility; that consumers often do not have a choice about which company they use; and that providers have much broader access to a customer’s online activities — across apps and search engines. They also argue that consumers pay for high-speed internet, which makes the relationship different than with a free app or website.

Supporters acknowledged that passing such legislation would be a battle: 19 other states have considered similar proposals, and none of those bills have yet to pass, though many are pending. Scott Jordan, a computer science professor at UC Irvine who until late last year was chief technologist for the FCC, spoke at a news conference organized by the bill’s supporters. In an interview, he said he was surprised that Congress moved so quickly to overturn the regulations he helped to draft, as internet privacy is valued by citizens of all political stripes. The rules, he said, were “fabulously popular amongst consumers, irrespective of party.”

Assembly Bill 375, by Assemblyman Ed Chau, D-Monterey Park, would affect California broadband providers in the following ways:

- Prohibit providers from using “pay-for-privacy” arrangements.
- Force providers to allow consumers to “opt in” before the companies “use, disclose, sell or permit access to” their personal information, including browsing activities.
- Require the companies to use clear language in consent agreements. — *San Jose Mercury News*

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Basic economics tells us that paying more for something when you can get something better for less is never a good idea.

That’s why we don’t understand the reasoning behind a bill recently proposed by state Sen. John Eichelberger, R-Hollidaysburg, to change the requirements for government public notices. If you flip to the classifieds in this paper, not just today, but every day, you will see public notices from a variety of government entities. Sometimes, it’s about a proposed ordinance from a local township or borough. Other times, it’s a government entity seeking bids for a public works project, a proposed tax increase, sheriff’s sales of foreclosed property or a wide variety of other things that are of public interest.

Those notices are not in the newspaper because the government is being nice and looking out for you. They’re in the newspaper because it is a requirement. It’s about transparency and allowing the public to know what is going on with those entities in charge of spending our tax money.

But Sen. Eichelberger wants to change that. His bill would remove the newspaper requirement and instead allow government bodies to merely upload public notices to a government-owned website. He claims this is a needed cost-saving measure. He couldn’t be more wrong.

First, there is already a website — publicnoticepa.com — where Pennsylvania’s newspapers upload their public notices at no additional cost to the taxpayer. A government-run website would cost money for personnel, IT, security, archiving and other related expenditures, which would certainly cost the taxpayer more money than advertising in the local newspaper. Why have the state government pay to operate a website when a free one is already in use?

Plus — and we hear from many of you who fall into this category regularly — not everyone has access to or the ability to use the internet. In fact, a recent study shows that approximately 29 percent of all Pennsylvanians do not use the internet at all. Going to an all-online system would disproportionately affect seniors as the same study indicates 36 percent of seniors don’t use the internet at all and 49 percent — nearly half! — of seniors do not have broadband access at home. There are also higher numbers of non-usage by rural residents, minorities, low-income individuals and the disabled. And we haven’t even mentioned certain religious groups like the Amish who use the internet exceedingly rarely.

Having the notices in newspapers allows those who cannot or do not have regular internet access a chance to see what is going on. Those same newspapers already upload notices to a website, so those who would prefer to access them online can do so right now. It also ensures the participation of an independent party in the notice process. Allowing the government to run a centralized website puts the government in control of the process from start to finish. That’s a recipe for abuse, misuse and corruption. And how often have stories of various cyber attacks been in the news recently? Having a

website serve as the only centralized location for important public notices is practically an engraved invitation for hackers to do their best to cripple the system.

We're not somehow claiming that every person in Pennsylvania reads a newspaper regularly. But 82 percent of adults in the state read a newspaper at least once a week, either in print or online. That's a lot better than many government websites that have such limited web traffic, it's not able to be measured.

In an era where government is more distrusted than ever before, more transparency is needed, not less, especially when moving in that direction is the most cost-efficient option. We urge all of Sen. Eichelberger's colleagues in the state capitol to reject this bill in the best interests of the taxpaying citizens they serve. – **Lewistown (Mifflin Co.) Sentinel editorial**

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Comcast Corp.'s NBC Sports plans to announce Wednesday it will televise an esports tournament later this summer, the latest broadcaster turning to competitive videogaming to grow viewership at a time when many consumers are cutting the cord. The cable network hopes a tournament built around a popular quirky game called "Rocket League" will attract hard-to-reach viewers—particularly younger males—who increasingly are ditching cable subscriptions for live-streaming services such as Netflix Inc.

NBC Sports is investing in the low millions of dollars on the initiative, said Rob Simmelkjaer, senior vice president of NBC Sports Ventures. "We look at emerging areas of sports," he said. "Esports has been something tough to ignore." This year, about 191 million people world-wide are expected to watch an esports contest at least once a month, more than double the number in 2012, according to Newzoo BV. By 2020, the research firm expects that viewership to climb to 286 million. Most people watch online, though, and getting those viewers to find esports programming on the TV has been a challenge.

Walt Disney Co.'s ESPN and Time Warner Inc.'s TBS have aired esports for more than a year, to modest ratings. TBS's Friday night show "ELeague," for example, has averaged 256,000 viewers this year, down from 272,000 in 2016, according to Nielsen. Spokesmen for ESPN and TBS said ratings have been in line with expectations, and that esports on TV is still relatively new. Like ESPN and TBS, NBC Sports plans to live stream its tournament online as well to reach as many viewers as possible.

ESPN and TBS say web viewership has been strong. The finale of a weeklong contest for TBS's "ELeague" attracted more than one million concurrent streams when it aired live in January on Amazon.com's Twitch, a record for a single channel on the video service. TBS plans to air more esports in the fall, including a championship around a new superhero-fighting game called "Injustice 2." Esports could still thrive on TV if contests involving more popular games are aired, Cowen & Co. analyst Doug Creutz said. "I don't know that we've had tier 1 esports events on TV yet," he said.

NBC Sports Network is in about 85 million homes, while its regional networks span about half as many households. The network hopes to differentiate its esports broadcast from the usual shooter or war-battle games with "Rocket League," a mashup of soccer and auto racing that was a top seller on Sony Corp.'s PlayStation store last year.

After a round of qualifiers in July, TV coverage will kick off on weekends in August on the regional networks. The tournament will conclude with a championship aired on the national network and in several countries abroad. The network also plans to open its tournament to people of all skill levels in the U.S. and Europe, rather than just professional teams. The total prize pool is \$100,000, NBC Sports said. "We want to find new esports stars," Mr. Simmelkjaer said. "There's an opportunity for new people to come out of the woodwork." – **Wall Street Journal**

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Comcast Corp. will officially begin selling smartphones on Wednesday at 17 Xfinity stores in the Philadelphia area and New Jersey. The cable giant launched Xfinity Mobile earlier this year, allowing Comcast to package TV, high-speed internet, wireline phone, and wireless into one bundle. The Comcast smart phones will utilize the Verizon Wireless network and hop onto WiFi networks whenever possible. Comcast and other cable companies have experimented with wireless products in the past, mostly unsuccessfully. Comcast bought wireless spectrum in the latest government wireless auction, but it has been financial cautious with the wireless venture. – **philly.com**



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