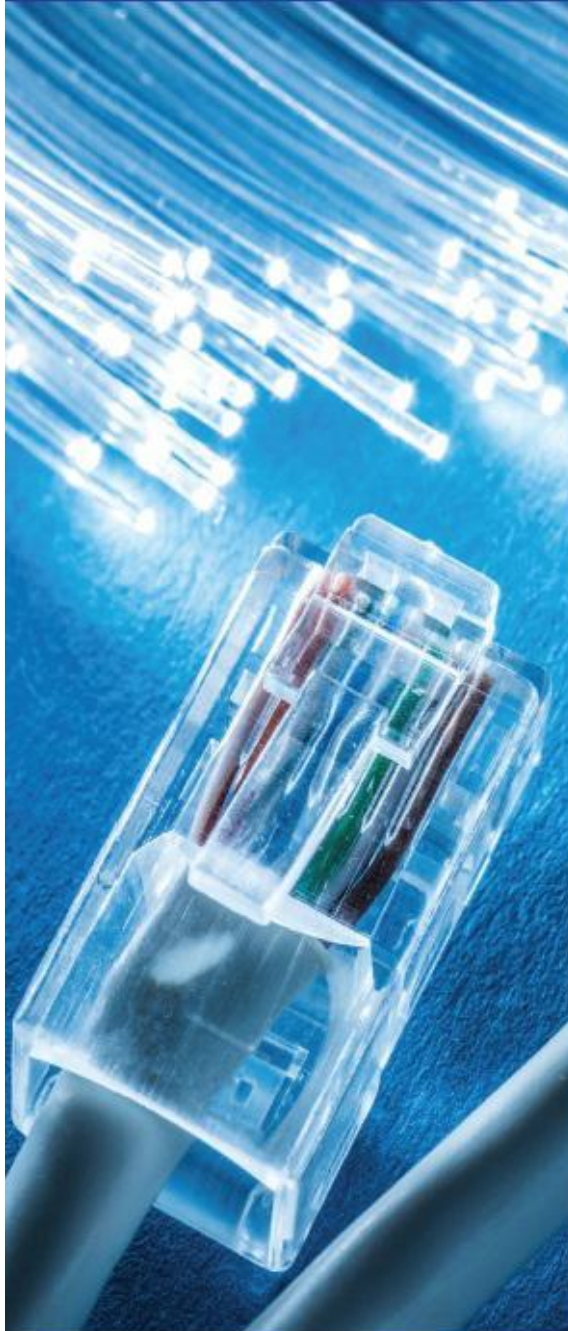


PA Townships **Value Relationship** with Cable Industry



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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Editorial: The Internet Archive's noble mission

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Wolf: No interest in new lockdown after York County COVID-19 spike

USA Today

Wisconsin protesters tear down Capitol statues, attack state Senator from Milwaukee as fury erupts again

The Hill

GOP senator blocks bill to boost mail-in and early voting during pandemic

Allentown Morning Call

Democrats hope Joe Biden's VP choice can help him win Pa. But who can do that?

After sitting in the Pennsylvania Senate Communication and Technology Committee for nearly a year Senate Bill 835 was amended and moved on for consideration on Monday.

The bill incentivizes internet providers or other capable agencies to expand into rural areas of the state and is primarily sponsored by Sen. Wayne Langerholc, R-Richland, but features bipartisan support. "This is something we've been working on for some time," Langerholc said. He explained that the need for high-speed broadband internet, in this case classified as 25 megabits per second download speed and 3 megabits per second upload speed, was brought to his attention in 2017 during the train derailment in Hyndman, Bedford County.

Seeing how taxed the first responders were with little to no service is what Langerholc used as a basis to get a draft together. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought attention to the need of widespread, high-speed internet access, he said. The way the bill will work is by making a "nongovernmental entity with the technical, managerial and financial expertise" of high-speed broadband infrastructure eligible for a grant to be used for rural expansion.

These grants, managed by the Commonwealth Financing Authority, will be funded through an initial \$5 million contribution by the state government. Langerholc said the \$5 million will be enough to get the program off the ground and future funding will be a topic of discussion as the bill continues to move through the system. All financing for the projects will be done through the Unserved High-speed Broadband Funding Program Account that Senate Bill 835 creates.

Organizations who receive this money must also agree to invest at least 25% of private capital to finance the proposed budget. That portion of the finances cannot include other state or federal grants, according to the bill. Any unused amount of the grant must be returned to the authority after the project is completed. There will be an application and review process by the authority, and applications will also be posted on the authority's website for public review.

Any area outlined in a proposed project must include evidence of an applicant's ability to establish and maintain high-speed internet, a description of the area including a census block and certification that none of the awarded money will be used to expand internet in regions that already have access. A proposed project area with broadband access is considered an "overbuild" and any application that is determined to be an example of this will be ineligible.

The legislation also requires the applicant to provide a list of the number of households and businesses that will benefit from the improvement, total cost and evidence "demonstrating the economic and commercial feasibility" of the installation. Most of the amendments provided by the technology committee were technical, Langerholc said, and the bill will now move on to the appropriations committee. Langerholc said if everything goes right with the legislation, there could be a vote this week or next. "I'm hopeful," he added. "I think this is an issue that's bipartisan." — ***Johnstown Tribune-Democrat***

Snyder County will spend its \$3.64 million CARES Act funding expanding broadband and renovating the former bank building in Middleburg. Another large chunk of the CARES Act funding will be spent on improving internet access, a campaign priority for both Commissioner Adam Ewig and Commissioner Chuck Steininger. "People have to be able to work and do schoolwork from home," said Kantz. "That's our No. 1 priority."

It will be money well spent, said Midd-West School Board President Victor Abate. "Some students, especially in the western part of the county, just don't have internet access," he said. "It's very necessary." The problem was

particularly acute during the COVID-19 pandemic as students struggled with online education when the health crisis closed schools. The district had to spend money paying for hot spots so students could access assignments online, he said. Kantz said the county must spend the funding before the end of this year. — ***Sunbury Daily Item***

Federal regulators will vote in July on whether to make “988” the number to reach a suicide prevention hotline. The Federal Communications Commission says phone service providers will have until July 2022 to implement the new number, if the measure is approved in July, as expected. Once it's in place, people will be able to dial 988 to seek help, like how you can call 911 for an emergency. Currently, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline uses a 10-digit number, 800-273-TALK (8255), which routes calls to about 170 crisis centers.

That 800 number will remain in place, but having the shorter number makes it easier for people to call, and is expected to lead to an increase in calls to the hotline. Suicide-prevention experts [have said](#) that the three-digit number will be a breakthrough that helps people in crisis. One aspect of designating a three-digit number for the hotline, just like 911 for emergencies, is that it removes stigma for seeking help in a mental-health emergency, they say.

The government's action comes as [suicide rates have increased](#) across the U.S. over the past two decades. The coronavirus pandemic has put [even more strain](#) on the nation's mental health care system, and experts have been concerned about the impact as the virus and its aftershocks may deepen people's levels of anxiety and depression. — ***Associated Press***

One America News Network, the conservative TV station that's been criticized for sharing conspiracy theories, has found a loyal fan in Donald Trump. The hard part will be parlaying that exposure into a larger audience. The president gave the network a big boost this month -- tweeting an OAN story that maligned the elderly protester who was knocked down and injured by police on TV during a protest in Buffalo, New York.

But unlike the networks it wants to compete with -- Fox News, MSNBC and CNN -- OAN has never been carried by big pay-TV providers like Comcast Corp., Charter Communications Inc. and Dish Network Corp. To reach its audience, the network depends heavily on its largest distributor, AT&T Inc.'s DirecTV, which has been losing subscribers at a rapid clip. DirecTV agreed to carry OAN in 2017 in a deal that at one point was scheduled to expire in early 2021, according to people familiar with the matter.

The companies declined to comment on any negotiation to extend the agreement. Charles Herring, president of OAN parent Herring Networks Inc., said the deal won't end in early 2021, but declined to provide details. Launched in 2013, OAN says it's available in about 35 million U.S. TV homes. Finding a spot on systems owned by Comcast, Charter and Dish would more than double that number, helping the channel reach another 48 million customers. For comparison, as of last June, Fox News had about 84 million subscribers.

OAN is also available online and through platforms like Roku, but it can't reach the large swaths of viewers that -- like many Fox News fans -- prefer their cable news on cable. And Trump amplifying the network and igniting controversy around it could make it harder to win over cable distributors. In an interview, Herring said that Trump's tweets about the channel “have been good for the brand” and he defended the network's reporting. He also praised AT&T for carrying OAN. “We are very pleased that AT&T seems to want to offer programming for everybody and not just people with one viewpoint,” he said.

But OAN's programming, while popular with Trump loyalists, may look problematic to Charter and Comcast -- especially now that companies are under greater scrutiny following protests about racial injustice and police

brutality. 'Antifa Tactics.' Earlier this month, a few dozen protesters gathered outside OAN's headquarters in San Diego in response to its recent report that Trump tweeted about. Oklahoma State football coach Mike Gundy has faced criticism for wearing an OAN T-shirt. The most prominent controversy began when OAN aired a report that said a 75-year-old protester seriously injured by Buffalo police "was appearing to use common Antifa tactics," a reference to the loosely organized leftist movement.

Videos that spread online showed two police officers knocking over the man, Martin Gugino, without provocation. He fell and began bleeding from his head. The officers were later arrested and charged with assault. (Gugino fractured his skull, according to his lawyer.) Trump didn't provide any evidence that the man, a longtime peace activist, had ties to organized antifascist protesters. Still, Trump tweeted the claim on June 9, drawing attention to the report and OAN. Trump's support for OAN comes at a time when he's been less friendly with Fox News. On Twitter, he has slammed that network for "doing nothing" to help him get re-elected.

One hurdle to getting carried by other to getting carried by other major TV providers may be OAN's contract with DirecTV. Under the terms, DirecTV is required to make OAN available to 85% of its subscribers, and the channel must seek the same arrangement with other pay-TV companies, according to a person with knowledge of the matter. In addition, OAN and its sister channel, AWE, which stands for "A Wealth of Entertainment," charge pay-TV providers a monthly fee of about 15 cents per subscriber, according to Herring. Tough Terms Together, those provisions may be too onerous to entice big cable-TV providers to carry the network, said the person, who asked not to be identified because the contract is private.

And OAN will have a large chunk of its audience at stake when it negotiates a contract renewal with AT&T, which has about 19 million pay-TV customers. The economics of the industry are also working against the network. Pay-TV companies like DirecTV are trying to cut how much they pay for channels as they lose customers to Netflix. Last month, AT&T shut down one of its own channels, the Audience Network. Since OAN's launch seven years ago, Herring has taken a confrontational approach in the industry, filing lawsuits and regulatory complaints against cable-TV providers.

OAN once ran billboard ads near Dish's headquarters in an effort to get the satellite-TV company to carry the channel. The billboards listed the mobile-phone number of a Dish executive and encouraged people to call. Herring Networks secured a spot for OAN on DirecTV in April 2017 after suing AT&T. Last month, a federal judge dismissed a separate defamation suit that OAN filed against MSNBC host Rachel Maddow after she called the channel "paid Russian propaganda." Comcast, which owns MSNBC, was also named in the case. — **Bloomberg**

Impeachment — that constitutional mechanism for checking the behavior of an elected official and possibly removing that person from office — is vital in our system of government. It keeps good people vigilant. It keeps the ambitious accountable. It, ideally, keeps the power-hungry off the top rungs of the ladder. Impeachment is the big stick that keeps our leaders in line. But that is exactly why it should be used sparingly.

Last week, state Rep. Daryl Metcalfe, R-Cranberry, introduced a resolution with five articles of impeachment, seeking the removal of Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, for actions during the coronavirus pandemic. The Tribune-Review has not been shy about criticizing the governor over the last three months. We have taken him to task for his communication skills. We have noted when shutdowns affected some businesses harshly while not touching others. We have scorned decisions that were made and then almost immediately upended.

But Metcalfe called Wolf a dictator, and that's hardly accurate. In fact some of the problems with the governor's orders and directions were that they were toothless. You only have to look at our last critique of his administration — when we questioned nursing home testing orders that weren't orders — to see that. The articles have some legitimate criticism of the governor's actions. They cite possible constitutional grounds. They say his waiver process for life-sustaining businesses was "arbitrary and capricious." They say unemployment benefits processing should have been better staffed and nursing homes needed more protection and more information needed to be released. We couldn't agree more. But impeachment is a coup de grace. It is the final blow in mortal combat. Metcalfe has fired it like a cap gun.

Aside from the fact that none of Wolf's moves seem as malicious as the representative and his 24 cosigners would seem to assert, there is the fact of the makeup of the General Assembly. While Republicans hold the majority in the House, they don't hold two-thirds of the Senate, which is what would be required for impeachment. That is not to say that impeachment should only be about winning. If members have a firmly held belief in the charges, they should introduce them, regardless of the potential for success.

However, the Wolf administration is already pulling back many measures as Pennsylvania steps to the forefront of states dealing well with the pandemic. Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention puts the Keystone State with Montana and Hawaii as the only states with downward trajectory for more than 42 days. While some states are spiking as they emerge from quarantines, that hasn't happened in Pennsylvania yet. The Legislature has already passed a resolution to end the state of emergency. While the governor has challenged that, it will be decided by the Supreme Court. Impeachment might have made more sense after the court weighed in on his actions.

Could the governor have done things differently? Better? More smoothly? Yes. Will we continue to point out when he does things wrong? Absolutely. But this doesn't seem to rise to a coup de grace response. Impeachment is important. It is our best weapon against corruption. But it should always be deployed judiciously. — ***Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* editorial**

