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A new bill being circulated by House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La., would dramatically alter how pay TV operators, broadcasters and programmers negotiate carriage deals.

The “Next Generation Television Marketplace Act” would repeal several rules governing cable and satellite TV operators’ mandated carriage of broadcast networks and replace it with a “consumer driven, free-market system.” “It’s time for Congress to ‘Cut the Cord’ on decades-old regulations, and finally update our 90’s-era laws that are now obsolete in an age where content is available on demand and on the go.

The competition among pay TV providers, streaming services, networks, and local channels has never been more intense, resulting in more choices for American families who are increasingly demanding more personalized viewing options at prices they can afford,” Scalise said in a [statement](#). Specifically, the bill would repeal provisions from the Communications Act that mandate the carriage and purchase of broadcast signals by cable operators, satellite providers, and their customers. It would also repeal the Communications Act’s retransmission consent provisions and the Copyright Act’s compulsory license provisions, allowing affiliates to more easily sell the programming they license.

The government hopes to promote more competition by eliminating its role in defining the scope of programming exclusivity. Unsurprisingly, stakeholders like the American Cable Association were quick to praise the bill. “ACA applauds Rep. Scalise for introducing legislation

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designed to overhaul archaic media laws and policies. The Scalise bill, to its credit, will prompt lawmakers and stakeholders to begin important conversations that should result in legislation next year that will truly serve the public interest," said ACA President and CEO Matthew Polka in a statement. The American Television Alliance also lauded the proposed legislation.

"The Next Generation Television Marketplace Act will jumpstart and elevate a long-overdue conversation about modernizing the rules of the road for how Americans access and pay for video content. The legislation is forward-thinking, free-market oriented and pro-consumer," said the ATVA. "We commend Congressman Scalise for his strong leadership to move this vitally important conversation forward. ATVA looks forward to working with Congressman Scalise and the many members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to pass pro-consumer video marketplace reform." The ATVA further illustrated its point by noting that since 2010, there have been more than 900 "broadcaster-initiated blackouts" of channels on pay TV operator platforms.

While the ACA and ATVA cheered the bill, the National Association of Broadcasters warned of the damage the bill could do. "Today's media marketplace has never been more robust, with consumer access to broadcast programming on more platforms than at any time in history. Unfortunately, the Next Generation Television Marketplace Act would undermine this great American success story. It would severely damage broadcasters' ability to serve local communities and hurt tens of millions of viewers who rely every day on broadcast TV for news, entertainment and lifeline weather coverage. NAB strongly opposes the Next Generation Television Marketplace Act," said NAB Executive Vice President of Communications Dennis Wharton in a statement. – *Fierce Cable*

Mike Pence sought to boost Lou Barletta Monday in Philadelphia, where he drew protesters and blasted Bob Casey as "more like Bernie Sanders than Pennsylvania." Pence headlined a public event touting the GOP tax law as well as a fundraiser for Barletta, who lags the state's Democratic incumbent in fundraising and polls. The Republican congressman joined Pence for both events.

[Pence rallied the largely partisan crowd](#) on the tax cuts by citing Democrat Nancy Pelosi's criticism that most people wouldn't see enough benefits from the law, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer: "Any leader who says \$1,000 in the pocket of American workers are 'crumbs' is out of touch with the American Public and should never lead the Congress again."

[Meanwhile in Harrisburg](#), Casey attacked the Trump administration's tax-cutting bill, saying it "gave away the store to the top 1 percent" and could have been written to deliver a far bigger tax break to the middle class. Barletta is leaning heavily on his ties to the Trump administration: the Pence fundraiser was expected to raise \$300,000 to \$400,000 for his Senate campaign.

[Outside that fundraiser were nearly 200 protesters](#), including some in costumes from the dystopian Hulu drama "The Handmaid's Tale," the Inquirer reported. Afterward, President Donald Trump posted on Twitter, reinforcing his support for Barletta. – *Allentown Morning Call*



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