

RESOLUTION NO. 2005-09-016R

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL FRANCHISING

WHEREAS, three bills have been introduced into the 109th Congress of the United States that would prevent the City of Urbana from requiring providers of cable and video services that use City rights-of-way from having to obtain a franchise from the City and thus prevent the City from meeting local community needs; and

WHEREAS, under the guise of public choice and increased competition, these bills would nationalize franchising, setting a course toward preemption of all local authority over the provision of cable and video services within the community; and

WHEREAS, these bills would reduce or eliminate financial and technical support that is critical to the City of Urbana and to the creation of local programs through public, educational and governmental access; and

WHEREAS, these bills eliminate any build-out requirements for any video service provider, thereby allowing providers to discriminate based on the wealth of the local neighborhoods they choose to serve; and

WHEREAS, these bills would deprive Urbana residents of the ability to address issues locally by removing to the state and federal government all customer service issues, transferring local enforcement of franchise issues to the federal bureaucracies and courts; and

WHEREAS, the City of Urbana supports competition, diversity and localism in media with a level playingfield where everyone plays by the same rules to accomplish those goals; and

WHEREAS, the City of Urbana recognizes that airwaves are a commodity that belong to the public, local cable franchising allows for cities and towns around the country to exercise local authority, decision-making and consumer protection, to establish and support commercial-free community television, and to receive franchise fees that private companies pay as compensation for their use of local public rights-of-way; and

WHEREAS, under existing law telephone companies are free to enter the video market today as common carriers, as open video service providers, or under the same local franchising framework as cable companies; and

WHEREAS, the City objects to legislation that creates a subsidy to the telecommunications industry at the expense of the City's taxpayers;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the members of the City Council of the City of Urbana, for the reasons stated above urge the Illinois Congressional Delegation and all other members of Congress to oppose Senate bills S. 1349 and S. 1504 and House bill H.R. 3146.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution, duly adopted, be forwarded immediately to the members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation and other members of Congress as deemed appropriate.

PASSED by the City Council this _____ day of _____, _____.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTAINS:

Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

APPROVED by the Mayor this _____ day of _____, _____.

Laurel Lunt Prussing, Mayor