

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
of  
Subcommittee on Communications & Technology Ranking Member Doris Matsui**

***Hearing on "Lights, Camera. Subscriptions: State of the Video Marketplace"***

**September 13, 2023**

Thank you, Chairman Latta.

Today's hearing comes at a critical time for the video marketplace. Customer preferences and business models are changing quickly. Congress needs to keep pace and this discussion will provide a needed forum for that. The market we'll be examining today is in the middle of a profound sea change. The pandemic continued a trend that was already building in the video ecosystem – consumers are steadily shifting away from traditional pay TV toward video on demand and other over the top services.

By some estimates, 80 million households will have cut the cord by 2026. As more families cut the cord than maintain a pay TV subscription, the implications for the market will be significant. Business models will need to adapt and our regulatory structures must be scrutinized to ensure they're preventing consumer harms. Because, these macro changes are already being felt across the industry, especially by consumers. Perhaps no more acutely than television blackouts. For anyone who's experienced a television blackout, they're pretty easy to understand – consumers pay for something they never get.

In almost any other industry, charging a consumer for something that's not delivered would be unthinkable. And yet, it's an experience that's all too common...you have friends over to watch the big game or your favorite show. But when you turn on the TV? Nothing. Despite being billed and paying in full. Nothing. No game, no show. And it's not just once, these blackouts can last for weeks. Not only that but they're becoming more and more common. It's estimated that there have been more than 1000 station blackouts since 2010. In 2019 alone there were 230. These blackouts are unfair and they have to stop.

As this Committee moves forward with our look into the video marketplace, I'm going to be laser focused on stopping these blackouts. But that's not the only issue we need to examine within the video ecosystem. As Congress moves forward with hearings like this, the FCC is also engaged on these important issues. The FCC is taking steps to crack down on bogus junk fees that so often cause sticker shock and inflated bills. The proceeding would require video distributors to provide the "all-in" price clearly and prominently in their ads and on subscribers' bills.

Consumers deserve accurate information to make informed decisions and I hope the FCC can strike the right balance. And, it would be an incomplete discussion if we didn't explore the incredibly challenging headwinds our valued local news partners are facing.

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From election information, to public safety alerts, to local high school sports, Americans rely on these trusted sources of information. I've seen it firsthand but I'm excited that Mr. Curtis Legeyt will be describing a perfect example of local news in KCRA, Sacramento. KCRA's award-winning journalism is an indispensable part of our region's civic fabric. And, during wildfires they provide a lifeline to every resident who needs it. As we move forward with these discussions, it's the needs of the locals that I'll be fighting for. Because, communities like Sacramento all over the country depend on it. With that, I appreciate today's witnesses for appearing before us and I look forward to this important discussion.

I yield the balance of my time.