



**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
STATE OF ILLINOIS**

**Summary of SB 678, House Amendment 4  
The CABLE AND VIDEO COMPETITION LAW OF 2007 and  
The CABLE AND VIDEO CUSTOMER PROTECTION LAW**

The Cable and Video Competition Law of 2007 and the Cable and Video Customer Protection Law, passed by the Illinois General Assembly and signed by Governor Rod Blagojevich, together encourage competition among cable television and video television companies, while codifying the strongest consumer protections in the country.

**Television over telephone lines to compete with cable.**

Traditional cable television service will soon be joined by a new type of television service provided over telecommunications wires and equipment. Under the new law, AT&T, which is deploying the new system, will provide service to 35% of the households in its service territory, which currently includes more than 3.5 million households.

**Service to be provided to all income groups.**

To ensure that all customer groups are served, the law requires that at least 30% of the service be offered in low-income areas statewide, and that video services be offered to low-income residents equal to their proportion of the local community. For example, in some areas 40% of the households are low-income, and in those communities, 40% of the households offered service must be low-income. AT&T becomes obligated to provide video service to 50% of the households where it provides local telephone service within two years of when its service is taken by 15% of the eligible customers.

**Local governments retain control over rights-of-way.**

The wires and equipment that provide television service are often located in the public right-of-way, requiring local governments to both accommodate new and additional equipment and to assure that their operations and the reasonable convenience of adjoining private property owners are not affected. The law requires new entrants to comply with the local governments' construction, technical and financial requirements while promoting new investment in television services.

## **Important public benefits, including free public, educational and government access protected.**

Current law requires traditional cable companies to fund and broadcast non-commercial public, educational and government programming. This important public benefit is preserved and extended so that companies offering paid television must also support and carry this programming, assuring non-profit, educational and governmental access to the television-viewing public. The law also requires that television providers that use the public rights-of-way connect public schools, parks, libraries and other public buildings their systems pass without charge to the local government.

## **Strong customer protections added for all pay-TV subscribers.**

The law also adopts important consumer protections that apply to cable and all other paid television services, including satellite service. The service standards include:

- Seven day installation guarantee
- Prompt repair times, and customer credits if repairs are delayed past 48 hours
- 60 day trial period, with pro-rata credits if service cancelled during first 60 days
- Term contracts cannot exceed 1 year, with early termination charges limited to the amount of the discount associated with the contract
- Disclosure of charges, including charges that increase at the end of a promotional period, at point of sale
- Rates for each level of service must be available to the public and disclosed on the company's web site, and rate increases or elimination of programming require 30 days notice.
- Bill payment due no sooner than 28 days, and specific notice requirements for termination of service
- Requires 4 hour appointment windows, with a \$25 credit if appointment is missed
- Prevents companies from requiring subscription to services other than television in order to obtain television service
- Requires company to block unwanted channels without charge, allowing customers to exclude offensive materials from their home
- \$150 customer credit for violation of customer privacy protections
- Establishes tough Attorney General enforcement of cable and video customer protections to supplement local enforcement.