

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1312

To impose a moratorium on increases in the rates charged for cable television service, to require the Federal Communications Commission to conduct an inquiry into the causes of such increases and the impediments to competition, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 25, 1999

Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mrs. THURMAN, Mr. STARK, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WEYGAND, Mr. COYNE, and Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce

A BILL

To impose a moratorium on increases in the rates charged for cable television service, to require the Federal Communications Commission to conduct an inquiry into the causes of such increases and the impediments to competition, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Cable Rate Morato-
5 rium Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. MORATORIUM REQUIRED.**

2 Within 10 days after the date of enactment of this
3 Act, the Federal Communications Commission shall by
4 order prohibit any cable operator from imposing or col-
5 lecting any increase in the rates for basic cable service
6 or for cable programming services above the rate that is
7 in effect for such service on March 1, 1999. Such order
8 shall remain in effect until otherwise provided by Act of
9 Congress enacted after the date of submission of the re-
10 port required by section 3(b).

11 **SEC. 3. INQUIRY AND REPORT.**

12 (a) INQUIRY REQUIRED.—Within 30 days after the
13 date of enactment of this Act, the Federal Communica-
14 tions Commission shall commence an inquiry on the na-
15 tionwide extent of and causes for increases in the rates
16 for basic cable service and for cable programming services
17 during the period from October 1, 1992, to March 1,
18 1999. Such study shall seek to identify the extent to which
19 competition has succeeded or failed in restraining such
20 rates, and the extent to which competition may be ex-
21 tended by Commission action.

22 (b) REPORT REQUIRED.—Within 6 months after the
23 date of enactment of this Act, the Federal Communica-
24 tions Commission shall submit to the Congress a report
25 on the results of the inquiry required by subsection (a).
26 The report shall include—

1 (1) a description of the nationwide extent of
2 and causes for increases in the rates for basic cable
3 service and for cable programming services during
4 the period from October 1, 1992 to March 1, 1999;

5 (2) an assessment of the extent to which com-
6 petition has succeeded or failed in restraining such
7 rates;

8 (3) an identification of the measures that the
9 Commission can and will take, pursuant to its exist-
10 ing statutory authority, to increase such competition
11 and to prevent and eliminate unjust or unreasonable
12 rates for basic cable service and for cable program-
13 ming services;

14 (4) proposed legislative changes that the Com-
15 mission determines are required to enable the Com-
16 mission to prevent and eliminate unjust or unreason-
17 able rates for basic cable service and for cable pro-
18 gramming services; and

19 (5) such other findings and recommendations
20 as the Commission considers appropriate.

21 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

22 The terms used in this Act have the meanings pro-
23 vided in sections 602 and 623 of the Communications Act
24 of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 522, 543).

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