

Below is a letter published in the Cleveland Free Times on the COPE bill.  
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Letter to the Editor, 6/29/06

Dan Harkins article, The Naked Truth, in the 6/21 – 6/27 issue, about Rose Wilcher, public access TV producer's battle with Time-Warner and the City of Akron, was an excellent article of what, we-the-public, may be up against if the telecommunication companies get their way.

Harkins points out that Time-Warner is now charging a \$25 fee to show public access videos which are suppose to be shown free. And they're restricting content to be- only local.

The House of Representative & the Senate Commerce Committee (with some changes), recently voted to continue this kind of restrictive federal legislation by passing the COPE (Communications Opportunity Promotion & Enhancement) bill, S. 2686, which will move to the full Senate for a vote in July.

If passed, this legislation will –eliminate the local franchise fees and agreements the cable companies currently pay cities and must arrange with each community.

Instead, a national franchise will be used by the Federal Communications Commission to offer services. Redlining is also likely to take place since poorer communities are likely to be ignored by the phone companies. Call Senators Voinovich & DeWine to vote against the COPE bill.

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