

VETO—S. 12

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

RETURNING

WITHOUT MY APPROVAL S. 12, THE CABLE TELEVISION
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMPETITION ACT OF 1992



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To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S. 12, the "Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992." This bill illustrates good intentions gone wrong, fallen prey to special interests.

Contrary to the claims made by its proponents, this legislation will not reduce the price Americans pay for cable television service. Rather, the simple truth is that under this legislation cable television rates will go up, not down. Competition will not increase, it will stagnate. In addition, this legislation will cost American jobs and discourage investment in telecommunications, one of our fastest growing industries.

S. 12 is clearly long on promises. Unfortunately, it is just as clearly short on relief to the American families who are quite rightly concerned about significant increases in their cable rates and poor cable service. Although the proponents of S. 12 describe the bill as procompetitive, it simply is not. Indeed, the only truly competitive provision, one that would have expanded the ability of telephone companies to compete with cable companies in rural areas, was dropped from the bill at the last minute.

S. 12 tries to address legitimate consumer concerns, but it does so by requiring cable companies to bear the costs of meeting major new federally imposed regulatory requirements and by adopting costly special interest provisions. For example, the bill requires cable companies for the first time to pay broadcasting companies, who have free access to the airwaves, to carry the broadcasters' programs. The undeniable result: higher rates for cable viewers.

Beyond increasing consumer costs, the bill takes certain key business decisions away from cable operators and puts them in the hands of the Federal Government. One provision, which is unconstitutional, requires cable companies to carry certain television stations regardless of whether the viewing public wants to see these stations. Another special interest provision would put the Federal Government in the position of dictating to cable companies to whom and at what price they could sell their programs. These types of federally mandated outcomes will discourage continued investment in new programs to the detriment of cable subscribers who have come to expect a wide variety of programming and new services.

I believe that the American people deserve cable television legislation that, unlike S. 12, will deliver what it promises: fair rates, good programming, and sound service.

GEORGE BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *October 3, 1992.*

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