

HOUSE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Ruth B. Balsler

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to support community access television.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Ruth B. Balsler</i>	<i>12th Middlesex</i>
<i>John J. Lawn, Jr.</i>	<i>10th Middlesex</i>
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>
<i>Stephen L. DiNatale</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>
<i>James M. Murphy</i>	<i>4th Norfolk</i>
<i>Kate Hogan</i>	<i>3rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Carlos, Gonzalez</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>
<i>Kevin J. Kuros</i>	<i>8th Worcester</i>

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)**

An Act to support community access television.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to increase access and awareness of the value of community access television, therefore, it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

Whereas, Community Media, formerly described as "Public Access Television", for over 30 years has proven to be an integral contributor and necessary ingredient of a communities fabric;
and

Whereas, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has shown support of Community Media by maintaining strict standards on cable television providers through Chapter 166a and 207CMR;
and

Whereas, there are approximately 200 Community Media centers in Massachusetts, many of them operating as non-profit organizations while some are managed by city and town government, providing hundreds of jobs, millions of dollars spent on capital equipment and commercial rent annually; and

Whereas, residents across the Commonwealth wish to keep in touch with their local government by viewing their city council or selectmen meetings, school committee and other commission meetings, chamber events, high school sports, regional and statewide legislative affairs shows, groundbreaking ceremonies, retirement dinners, dance recitals, school plays and so much more; and

Whereas, the culture and definition surrounding cable television is changing rapidly, and Community Media is only supported through cable television franchise agreements; now

Be It Resolved, that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts does everything in its power to preserve sufficient funding of its Community Media centers thereby protecting them from extinction, by passing legislation and supporting the adoption of regulations consistent with the legislation, and any other measures involving Multiple Video Programming Distributors (MVPD), and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Massachusetts Legislature requests that their colleagues on the federal level do everything in their power to see that Community Media legislation is introduced and enacted in Congress and that a Telecom Act of 1996 rewrite ensures that Community Media is addressed and protected by the FCC.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The general court finds and declares that this act shall be known and may
2 be cited as the “Act to Support Community Access Television.”

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 166A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
4 section 22 the following sections:-

5 Section 23. Any fees or monies received by a municipality for the purposes of public,
6 educational or governmental access cable television services shall be distributed to an operator of
7 a public, educational or governmental access cable television station and, if any of said fees or
8 monies or portion thereof is not distributed to said operator, the municipality shall provide an
9 accounting to said operator and make said accounting a public document in accordance with
10 section 10 of chapter 66.

11 Section 24. All cable television providers shall locate PEG channels in as close
12 proximity as possible to broadcast channels and provide PEG channels with the ability to
13 broadcast in High Definition or other technology offered to broadcast channels. Cable television
14 providers shall also ensure proper mapping of channels.