

Rep. Bieda offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 245.

A resolution to encourage cable operators to maintain public access channels at their existing, lower tier location and provide these channels at no additional cost to subscribers.

Whereas, The federal Communications Act allows local franchising authorities to require cable providers to set aside channels for public, education, or governmental (PEG) use. Most Michigan city and township governments, acting as local franchising authorities, have negotiated the inclusion of PEG channels in their cable packages. In order that these channels be accessible to all cable customers, they are often offered in the lowest tier of channels, thereby allowing those customers who do not subscribe to digital programming to receive the PEG channels; and

Whereas, Local government programming on the PEG channels is an important means used by government officials to reach out to their constituents. PEG channels provide an accessible way for local content to be distributed to the community, and the use of PEG channels by education, government, and healthcare entities has been met with great success; and

Whereas, Customers who subscribe to basic cable do not need a digital box to access the PEG channels, which are currently broadcast in analog format. The move of PEG channels to a higher channel, outside the range of analog television, will require the installation of a digital box. Customers may have to pay a monthly fee in order to maintain the digital box and access to the higher PEG channels. Many elderly and low-income residents may not be able to afford the digital box and will lose access to their PEG channels; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we encourage cable operators to maintain public access channels at their existing, lower tier location and provide these channels at no additional cost to subscribers; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Michigan Public Service Commission, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, and the Michigan Cable Telecommunications Association.