



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1760

Resolution calling on United States Attorney General Jeff Sessions and the United States Department of Justice to consider the importance of independent programming on TV, such as Televisión Dominicana, as the AT&T/Time Warner merger is reviewed.

By Council Members Espinal and Reynoso

Whereas, AT&T is one of the largest internet and telephone providers in the United States; and

Whereas, In July 2015, AT&T acquired DIRECTV for approximately \$50 billion and became one of the country's biggest television distributors with over 26 million subscribers; and

Whereas, As part of the agreement, AT&T offered discounted broadband to low-income households, provided schools and libraries with more efficient broadband access and also agreed to adhere to the Federal Communications Commission's stricter net neutrality obligations; and

Whereas, DIRECTV offered Televisión Dominicana, the eleventh highest watched Spanish language network that produced several shows in the New York and Boston areas and also served as an informational network for over 2.3 million Dominicans living in the United States, as well as 500,000 Dominicans living in Puerto Rico; and

Whereas, Televisión Dominicana offered nine hours per day of live news and talk shows directly from the Dominican Republic dealing with issues, such as immigrant families establishing new lives in the United States and also educating Dominican-Americans about Dominican culture, family and homeland; and

Whereas, In October 2016, it was announced that AT&T wanted to buy Time Warner in an \$85 billion deal that would combine the largest telecom company with news and entertainment producers, such as HBO, TNT and CNN raising concern that one company would have too much authority over vital information

sources; and

Whereas, Recently, DIRECTV removed Televisión Dominicana, its only channel that serves the Dominican community, while AT&T was seeking approval to acquire Time Warner; and

Whereas, Also, Televisión Dominicana was removed only a few days before Hurricane Irma struck the Dominican Republic leaving many Dominican subscribers without important news and updates regarding the hurricane as it developed; and

Whereas, In 2015, DIRECTTV also removed Yaveo, a Spanish-language service that provided programming from Latin America and Spain and in 2016, DIRECTV temporarily removed most of Univision Communications networks, the country's largest Spanish-language media company during disputes over programming fees; and

Whereas, Televisión Dominicana's removal has caused outrage amongst Hispanic leaders and the Hispanic community; and

Whereas, Furthermore, the proposed merger between AT&T and Time Warner have many elected officials and the public concerned that independent programming, such as Televisión Dominicana will not have any protections under a merger between the two largest media corporations in the country; and

Whereas, In November 2017, the United States Department of Justice filed a lawsuit to block the merger in order to protect consumers and maintain an array of media and telecommunication outlets now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on United States Attorney General Jeff Sessions and the United States Department of Justice to consider the importance of independent programming on TV, such as Televisión Dominicana, as the AT&T/ Time Warner merger is reviewed.

PM
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