



Bill No: House Bill 918 – Montgomery County – Landlord and Tenant –
Access to Cable Television Systems and Equipment

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Date: 03/31/22

Position: Support

Astound Broadband maintains and operates its own fiber-rich network, offering competitively priced high-speed internet, streaming TV, and phone. We have been a part of the Montgomery County community for years – providing award-winning service and 24/7 customer support. Astound Broadband is committed to three fundamental tenets: Partnership, Choice, and Technology, whereby we partner with property owners and developers in order to provide a choice of services for commercial and residential use. We welcome the opportunity to serve more Montgomery County citizens who are currently not able to access our services due to restrictions imposed by some landlords.

Astound Broadband supports HB918 for the following reasons:

First - Creating an environment of choice will foster a competitive market for quality products, pricing, and overall service.

Second - HB918 provides an incentive for multifamily landlords to remain engaged, invested, and active in the action required to address barriers to equitable access and choice.

Finally - The Federal Trade Commission (FCC) rulings do not go far enough to address the gap between inaction and purposefully entering exclusive agreements.

Multifamily residents may have access to some level of connectivity, but choice of service provider along with products and pricing options that meet their needs are likely limited. A competitive market, with the representation of a full suite of providers, is what allows equitable access for every multifamily subscriber to have a say in what type of service they receive. Having the *choice* to disconnect and find something different, something better, something more affordable, is only possible when there are multiple providers available who are each competing to earn customers by providing the best quality service.

Concerns about protecting the physical integrity of a property make it understandable that landlords may have questions regarding timeframes for construction and methods to install telecommunications infrastructure and equipment, but the terms governing this work are



commonly negotiated and addressed within the language of any standard access agreement between the landlord and service provider. The rights of tenants to access competitive information, options, and service offers should not be restricted by indifference or countering priorities and goals.

The FCC rulings against entering into exclusive access agreements, or restrictive marketing continue to be silent on a landlord's decision to NOT engage with competitors. This scenario creates a default preferred provider and denies the intention of ensuring that tenants have a choice of service.

Astound Broadband encourages support for tenants' rights to access competitive service and supports HB918.

Thank you –

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