



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Delegate Magazine 1975

Extracted on Apr-24-2024 05:37:01

The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website (transcription.si.edu), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the National Museum of African American History and Culture as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the National Museum of African American History and Culture website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact National Museum of African American History and Culture or transcribe@si.edu

For more information on this project and related material, contact the National Museum of African American History and Culture. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

BLACK LEADERS OPPOSE PAY-TELEVISION

When the Federal Communications Commission held hearings in Washington, D.C., October 23-25, 1974, Black leaders from across the nation rallied in opposition to pay-television - a system under consideration for which television owners and viewers would have to pay for popular programs, movies and sports events they now see FREE through commercial television. They were universal in their testimony that pay-television would not be in the interest of the poor, the aged, the incarcerated, and those in hospitals and nursing homes.

Here is what some of them said:

"Those who would suffer most if pay-cable TV siphoned off free TV's programming would be those already economically disadvantaged. In St. Louis, we know what that would mean. Our city had at least a 45% black population. Discriminatory factors keep a vastly disproportionate percentage of the black community economically poor. (This observation can be applied to most of our nation's cities.) The poor simply cannot afford another expense item in their already-strained or non-existent budgets...I urge the Commission to retain without any relaxation its current current regulations regarding pay-TV."

-Gwen Giles, Commissioner of Human Relations
St. Louis Council on Human Relations

"Our opposition to pay-cable grows out of the fact that a larger listening audience, including millions of poor families, would be cut off from good TV programming by this system of taxation since they could not afford to pay. Why should people with regular network TV be denied the opportunity to enjoy major sports and entertainment events? For Blacks and other non-whites, this would prove particularly difficult since many of the heroes of the Black community have been molded in the sports arena.

"Pay cable is a capital intensive industry. A city like Washington, D.C. with a population of some 800,000 people would conservatively cost between \$20 and \$40 million to wire. The financing of the initial start of pay cable is generally in the hands of multiple systems operators who provide some local ownership but only on an 80%-20% basis. The multiple systems operator then uses the local citizens to "provide the community knowledge and political influence necessary to gain the franchise." Since the multiple systems operator provides the capital and technical expertise, and maintains full operating control once the franchise is granted, the pattern provides virtually no on-going local involvement in most cases. According to "Cablelines," a monthly publication of the Cablecommunications Resource Center, the major battle grounds for community input will quite likely be cities of some 200,000 to 1 million. These will be the areas where aggressive multiple systems operators will want control over the entire city.

"The economics are even more startling when it is pointed out that the cost for programming over network TV is approximately 2c per household while for pay TV that cost is \$3.00 to \$4.00 per household per event. For sports events this frequently runs to \$100.00 per season.

"The networks were able to run a total sports season for \$47 million; pay TV, however, ran combined charges of \$27 million on the one night feature sports event of the Ali-Foreman match. The estimated charge

BLACK LEADERS OPPOSE PAY-TELEVISION

When the Federal Communications Commission held hearings in Washington, D.C., October 23-25, 1974, Black leaders from across the nation rallied in opposition to pay-television — a system under consideration for which television owners and viewers would have to pay for popular programs, movies and sports events they now see FREE through commercial television. They were universal in their testimony that pay-television would not be in the interest of the poor, the aged, the incarcerated, and those in hospitals and nursing homes.

Here is what some of them said:

"Those who would suffer most if pay-cable TV siphoned off free TV's programming would be those already economically disadvantaged. In St. Louis, we know what that would mean. Our city has at least a 45% black population. Discriminatory factors keep a vastly disproportionate percentage of the black community economically poor. (This observation can be applied to most of our nation's cities.) The poor simply cannot afford another expense item in their already-strained or non-existent budgets. . . . I urge the Commission to retain without any relaxation its current current regulations regarding pay-TV."

—Gwen Giles, Commissioner of Human Relations
St. Louis Council on Human Relations

"Our opposition to pay-cable grows out of the fact that a larger listening audience, including millions of poor families, would be cut off from good TV programming by this system of taxation since they could not afford to pay. Why should people with regular network TV be denied the opportunity to enjoy major sports and entertainment events? For Blacks and other non-whites, this would prove particularly difficult since many of the heroes of the Black community have been molded in the sports arena.

"Pay cable is a capital intensive industry. A city like Washington, D.C. with a population of some 800,000 people would conservatively cost between \$20 and \$40 million to wire. The financing of the initial start of pay cable is generally in the hands of multiple systems operators who provide some local ownership but only on an 80%-20% basis. The multiple systems operator then uses the local citizens to "provide the community knowledge and political influence necessary to gain the franchise." Since the multiple systems operator provides the capital and technical expertise, and

maintains full operating control once the franchise is granted, the pattern provides virtually no on-going local involvement in most cases. According to "Cablelines," a monthly publication of the Cablecommunications Resource Center, the major battle grounds for community input will quite likely be cities of some 200,000 to 1 million. These will be the areas where aggressive multiple systems operators will want control over the entire city.

"The economics are even more startling when it is pointed out that the cost for programming over network TV is approximately 2c per household while for pay TV that cost is \$3.00 to \$4.00 per household per event. For sports events this frequently runs to \$100.00 per season.

"The networks were able to run a total sports season for \$47 million; pay TV, however, ran combined charges of \$27 million on the one night feature sports event of the Ali-Foreman match. The estimated charge was \$20 per person."

—Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, National President
Operation PUSH, Chicago

"Minority people watch more free television and have lower incomes than other Americans.

"You will never be able to convince me, nor the thousands of people I represent, that it is their interest to begin to pay for television programs, sports and other events, now brought into their homes FREE. In fact, there is a serious question as to whether pay-cable operators would even wire up ghetto areas because it would be very costly and people basically would not be able to afford their charges."

—Livingston L. Wright, Executive Director
New York Urban League



Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, National President of Operation PUSH, as he opposed Pay-Cable Television before the Federal Communications Commission during hearings held on October 23, 1974.

was \$20 per patron."

-Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, National President
Operation PUSH, Chicago

"Minority people watch more free television and have lower incomes
than other Americans.

"You will never be able to convince me, nor the thousands of people I
represent, that it is their interest to begin to pay for television programs,
sports and other events, now brought into their homes FREE! In fact,
there is a serious question as to whether pay-cable operators would
even wire up ghetto areas because it would be very costly and people
basically would not be able to afford their charges."

-Livingston L. Wingate, Executive Director
New York Urban League

[[image - black and white photograph of Jesse Jackson at speaker's
podium, an audience behind him, and two men seated at a long table in
front of him]]

[[caption]] Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, National President of Operation
PUSH, as he opposed Pay-Cable Television before the Federal
Communications Commission during hearings held on October 25,
1974. [[/caption]]

Delegate Magazine 1975
Transcribed and Reviewed by Digital Volunteers
Extracted Apr-24-2024 05:37:01



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)