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## **AT&T Deliberately Segregating Public Programming**

### ***New Report Confirms AT&T's Discriminatory Treatment of Public Channels is a Business Decision, Not a Technical Issue***

An independent, nationally recognized engineering firm has determined that AT&T **can** deliver public, educational and government (PEG) programming with the same quality and functionality as commercial channels, despite AT&T's claims to the contrary.

AT&T, a multi-billion dollar telecommunications company and Illinois' first video provider franchised under The Cable and Video Competition Law of 2007, claims it isn't possible with its U-Verse system to provide equal treatment for PEG channels used by the public.

Contrary to AT&T's claims, Maryland-based Columbia Telecommunications Corporation reports that the technology is readily available to allow delivery of PEG channels on AT&T's U-Verse platform without the deficiencies of AT&T's current system.

AT&T's U-Verse system removes local PEG channels from the standard lineup, dumping dozens of channels into a generic "Channel 99" – stripping away individual channel identities and depriving those channels of basic functions viewers have come to expect.

AT&T subscribers can no longer tune to the familiar cable channel for the village board meeting or homework help program. Viewers can't switch between commercial and PEG channels, set a DVR to record a PEG program, or depend on getting timely local emergency alerts. AT&T's system deprives PEG channels of basic capabilities such as closed captioning.

"The [CTC report](#) proves that the only obstacles to AT&T treating PEG access in an equivalent manner to broadcast channels is its decision not to do so" says Julie Gray, President of Illinois NATOA, a regional organization of local government communications staff and experts. "In fact, IPTV architecture offers greater, not less, flexibility to localize channel line ups."

"It's unacceptable for the first state franchisee in Illinois to disregard Illinois law on a matter so close to the community," says Mayor Irvana K. Wilks of Mount Prospect, "Removing PEG channels from view deprives local residents of information that isn't available anywhere else. It's time for the excuses to end and equivalent treatment of public channels to begin."

A hearing before the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government scheduled for September 17 in Washington D.C. will examine the threats to PEG access occurring throughout the country. Barbara Popovic, Executive Director of Chicago Access Network Television (CAN TV) and an Illinois NATOA member, will testify on behalf of Alliance for Community Media and Alliance for Communications Democracy.