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## **FreedomWorks, Dick Armey Commend Bipartisan Effort for Cable Reform**

***Six Senators sign statement calling for reform.***

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**Washington, D.C.** - In a demonstration of the bipartisan commitment to cable franchise reform, six senators on the Senate Commerce Committee signed a statement outlining principles for greater competition in video services. FreedomWorks applauds Senators DeMint (R-S.C.), Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), Kerry (D-Mass.), McCain (R-Ariz.), Ensign (R-Nev.), and Smith (R-Ore.) for coming together and recognizing that new technology has made current telecom laws obsolete. As a result these outdated laws consumers are being penalized through high prices and limited access to technology. It is also harming America's global competitiveness. In recent years the United States has fallen behind Europe and Japan in internet deployment. Where we were once a global leader we now rank a dismal 16th place.

The senators agree that competition brings better service at a reduced cost for consumers. In their joint statement, they identify current laws written for a different era as a roadblock to competition: "Federal, state, and local policies regulating the offering of video services were developed in a different period. Laws, rules, and regulations that were once desirable now serve as barriers to competitive entry and disincentives to network investment."

Former House Majority Leader and current FreedomWorks Chairman Dick Armey commented, "Senators DeMint, Rockefeller, Kerry, McCain, Ensign, and Smith are leaders in telecom reform and are putting American consumers and the American economy first. They are helping to unleash the power of technology into every community in the nation."

New technology allows cable, phone, and even power companies to compete and offer voice, video, and data services directly to consumers. The senators are alarmed that only 2 percent of America's 33,000 cable communities offer consumers a competitive choice. Without competition cable consumers are faced with limited service and prices that climb well beyond the rate of inflation.

An example of what is possible can be found in Keller, Texas. Keller recently became one of the first sites in the nation where vigorous and meaningful competition came to the video services business. Following state legislation that opened up the local market, Verizon began offering its high-speed, fiber-optic based FiOS TV service complete with 140 channels. The incumbent cable company – which heretofore had a monopoly for all intents and purposes – responded by reducing its rates by 25 percent. The end result of this head-to-head competition was that consumers received better service at a lower price.

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