
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 205 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY ARGALL, MARTIN, CULVER, BOSCOLA, HUTCHINSON AND
COSTA, NOVEMBER 21, 2023

REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, NOVEMBER 21, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating the 75th anniversary of the birth of cable
2 television in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The year 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the
4 birth of the cable television industry nationwide and in
5 Pennsylvania; and

6 WHEREAS, In the 1940s, only a few television stations
7 existed, mostly in larger cities, making it difficult for people
8 outside urban areas to access broadcast signals; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1948, John Walson, an appliance store owner in
10 the small town of Mahanoy City, Schuylkill County, had
11 difficulty selling television sets to local residents because
12 reception in the area was so poor; and

13 WHEREAS, To solve his reception problem, Walson put an
14 antenna on top of a nearby mountain; and

15 WHEREAS, Television signals were received and transported
16 over twin-lead antenna wires directly to his store; and

17 WHEREAS, Once local residents saw these early results,
18 television sales soared; and

1 WHEREAS, Walson worked to improve the picture quality by
2 using coaxial cable and self-manufactured boosters to bring CATV
3 to the homes of customers who bought television sets; and

4 WHEREAS, Milton Jerrold Shapp, who later was elected Governor
5 of Pennsylvania during the 1970s, developed a master antenna
6 television system to eliminate the forest of antennas for city
7 department stores and apartment buildings; and

8 WHEREAS, Shapp's system used coaxial cable and signal
9 boosters, capable of carrying multiple signals at once; and

10 WHEREAS, At about the same time in the nearby town of
11 Lansford, another appliance salesman named Robert Tarlton
12 developed the first commercial cable television system in the
13 United States; and

14 WHEREAS, Rural parts of Pennsylvania, which had only three
15 channels, one for each network, soon had more than double the
16 original number of channels as operators began to import
17 programs from independent stations in New York and Philadelphia;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, The wider variety of channels and clearer reception
20 the service offered soon attracted viewers from urban areas, and
21 by 1962, nearly 800 cable systems were operational, serving
22 850,000 subscribers; and

23 WHEREAS, Since 1996, Pennsylvania's cable industry has led
24 the development of broadband Internet service throughout this
25 Commonwealth, currently providing service to approximately 3
26 million customers; and

27 WHEREAS, Nationally, that investment of private capital by
28 cable companies exceeds \$245 billion; and

29 WHEREAS, Throughout Pennsylvania, the cable industry
30 significantly contributes to charities, educational institutions

1 and nonprofit organizations; and

2 WHEREAS, Taxes and franchise fees paid directly to
3 municipalities in this Commonwealth annually exceed well over
4 \$200 million; and

5 WHEREAS, Today, broadband cable companies employ more than
6 13,000 Pennsylvanians, while more than 118,000 Pennsylvania
7 workers are employed directly and indirectly by the cable
8 industry; and

9 WHEREAS, Five of the nation's top 20 cable companies are
10 headquartered in Pennsylvania: Armstrong, Blue Ridge
11 Communications, Comcast, Service Electric Cable TV &
12 Communications and Service Electric Cablevision; and

13 WHEREAS, Additionally, Pennsylvania's cable operators offer
14 free cable service to virtually all primary and secondary
15 schools in this Commonwealth while continuing to provide 100%
16 funding and support for the Pennsylvania Cable Network (PCN),
17 one of the country's premiere state public affairs platforms;
18 therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That the Senate commemorate the 75th anniversary of
20 the birth of cable television in Pennsylvania.