

# TENNESSEE CABLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION

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## **The Reviews are in from Across the State – AT&T’s Plan is Bad News for Tennessee Consumers and Communities**

NASHVILLE – The state’s newspapers, municipal and county mayors and local elected officials have all weighed in on the cable franchise issue with the overwhelming sentiment that the proposal pushed by AT&T is bad for communities and consumers.

From Memphis across Middle Tennessee and into the Tri-Cities, the opinions are clear – removing local control, stripping consumer protections, giving AT&T carte blanche to rights of way and eliminating build-out requirements is bad policy for Tennessee. Virtually every Tennessee mayor and local government body is on the record in opposition to the AT&T proposal.

“Just like a bad movie, the AT&T proposal has been universally slammed by local governments and the press,” said Stacey Briggs, TCTA executive director. “In small and large cities, where they have carefully evaluated what is best for their citizens, the message is clear – this bill is really bad for consumers and local governments. Dismantling a system that works well and protects consumers will have extremely negative consequences.”

This is a sampling of the coverage against AT&T:

“Legislators shouldn’t take regulatory control away from the level of government that is closest to the people.” – *The (Memphis) Commercial Appeal*, April 15, 2007

“Will local governments have the control they need if true authority is in Nashville? Customers will have no local government agency with whom to lodge a complaint over poor service, improper billing or other problems where a controlling authority is essential.” – *Knoxville News Sentinel*, May 8, 2007

“It sounds as if AT&T is asking Tennessee lawmakers to stack the deck in its favor. That would neither be fair nor reflect the true spirit of competition.” – *Johnson City Press* February 25, 2007

“There is no reason the telecommunications giant can’t live by the current rules that give control over cable franchising to local municipalities... We fail to see any advantage to the city or to local residents to give AT&T a free pass to operate with a heavy hand in Jackson or anywhere else in Tennessee.” – *Jackson Sun*, April 23, 2007

“When a sensible apparatus already exists for telecoms to enter into any given market and they would rather change the rules to get a leg up, something isn’t right.” – *Suburban Community News – Shelby, Tipton and Fayette Counties*, May 6, 2007

“City officials say they oppose the legislation, which has been pushed by AT&T and BellSouth, because it could take away local control of revenues, require governments to fund public access channels, and weaken consumer protections.” – *The Oakridger* February 28, 2007

“Soddy-Daisy is concerned that AT&T will build its lines in Chattanooga and ignore the less densely populated areas in parts of Soddy-Daisy. It also worries that under a state agreement the firm will not be as open to donating its services to local public use such as school and municipal meetings or announcements.” – *Chattanooga.com*, April 6, 2007

“Specifically, it (AT&T) wants a competitive business climate where nobody – nobody – can force it to run wire in lower Antioch, upper Joelton or every hollow in Cannon County if it doesn’t want to.” – *The Tennessean*, April 8, 2007

“If this bill takes shape, this would truly be a sad situation for Nashville’s African American community and indeed the hard-working families throughout the state that do not meet AT&T’s definition of “high value” customers.” – *The Tennessee Tribune*, April 19, 2007

“Lawmakers would be wise to wait on the AT&T bill until they have a better idea of the company’s current DSL capacity and its intentions with regard to future services. As it stands, rural customers don’t get their money’s worth.” – *The (Murfreesboro) Daily News Journal*, April 22, 2007

“Each and every community makes its own deal and it is hard to see how a statewide charter could treat every community with equity,” – *The Tullahoma News & Guardian*, April 18, 2007

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