

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 504 Session of
2007

INTRODUCED BY SANTONI, CALTAGIRONE, COHEN, DePASQUALE, GEIST,
HENNESSEY, MANDERINO, PETRONE AND YOUNGBLOOD,
FEBRUARY 26, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FEBRUARY 26, 2007

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of November 20, 1968 (P.L.1075, No.329),
2 entitled "An act providing for the growth and development of
3 noncommercial educational television; creating the
4 Pennsylvania Public Television Network Commission as an
5 independent commission and defining its powers and duties,"
6 providing for the establishment of a Public Access,
7 Educational Access and Governmental Access Television
8 Advisory Council and defining its powers and duties;
9 establishing the Public Access, Educational Access and
10 Governmental Access Capital Improvement Fund; and making an
11 appropriation.

12 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
13 hereby enacts as follows:

14 Section 1. Section 1 of the act of November 20, 1968
15 (P.L.1075, No.329), referred to as the Public Television Network
16 System Law, is amended to read:

17 Section 1. Declaration of Public Policy.--The General
18 Assembly hereby declares that [it]:

19 (1) It is in the public interest of the Commonwealth to
20 encourage and develop the growth of noncommercial educational,
21 public access and governmental access television broadcasting,
22 including the use of such media for instructional purposes[;

1 that the], public access and governmental access.

2 (2) The expansion and development of noncommercial
3 educational, public access and governmental access television
4 broadcasting and its programming diversity depend on freedom,
5 imagination and initiative[; that it].

6 (3) It furthers the general welfare to encourage such
7 programming which will be responsive to the interests of people
8 throughout [the] this Commonwealth and which will constitute an
9 expression of diversity and excellence[; that it].

10 (4) It is necessary and appropriate for the State government
11 to complement, assist and support a policy that will most
12 effectively make noncommercial educational, public access and
13 governmental television service available to the people of [the]
14 this Commonwealth[; and that an].

15 (5) An independent commission should be created to
16 facilitate the development of educational, public access and
17 governmental television broadcasting and to afford maximum
18 protection from extraneous interference and control.

19 (6) The formation and operation of public access,
20 educational access and governmental access cable television
21 stations throughout this Commonwealth provides important
22 services to the residents and communities they serve.

23 (7) These television stations provide an opportunity for
24 residents, educators, schools, community colleges, universities,
25 nonprofit organizations and governments to directly communicate
26 with the communities served by the stations.

27 (8) The stations also provide an important fabric to the
28 democratic process by giving residents, educational
29 institutions, nonprofit organizations and governments an
30 unfettered ability to promote the important rights of freedom of

1 speech and freedom of press.

2 (9) Each station provides the only noncommercial opportunity
3 for the residents, educators, educational institutions,
4 nonprofit organizations and governments to directly produce
5 television programs that broadcast directly to homes, schools
6 and businesses through the cable television systems served by
7 the stations.

8 (10) It is in the best interest of this Commonwealth and its
9 residents to promote the operations of such public access,
10 educational access and governmental access cable television
11 stations.

12 Section 2. The act is amended by adding sections to read:

13 Section 4.2. Public Access, Educational Access and
14 Governmental Access Television Advisory Council.--There is
15 hereby established and placed within the commission a Public
16 Access, Educational Access and Governmental Access Television
17 Advisory Council, whose members shall consist of: the president
18 of the Pennsylvania Cable Television and Communications
19 Association or his designee; the president or chief executive
20 officer or his designee of each of the cable television stations
21 organized in this Commonwealth to provide one or all of the
22 following services to the public: public access, educational
23 access or governmental access; the Secretary of Education or his
24 designee; the director of communications for majority and
25 minority caucuses of the Senate and the House of
26 Representatives; the chairman of the Pennsylvania Public
27 Television Network Commission; the chief telecommunications
28 technology policy officer of the Executive Department of the
29 Commonwealth or the officer's designee and the Pennsylvania
30 coordinator of the Alliance for Community Media. The council

1 shall elect from its members a chairman and vice chairman. The
2 chairman or his designee shall serve as an ad hoc, nonvoting
3 representative to the commission. The members of the council
4 shall meet from time to time as they deem necessary to advise
5 the commission on promoting and assisting the operations of
6 public access, educational access and governmental access cable
7 television stations within this Commonwealth. They also shall
8 review all applications for grants from the Public Access,
9 Educational Access and Governmental Access Capital Improvement
10 Fund established by section 4.3 and recommend to the
11 Pennsylvania Public Television Network Commission the recipients
12 of grants from the fund.

13 Section 4.3. Public Access, Educational Access and
14 Governmental Access Capital Improvement Fund.--The Public
15 Access, Educational Access and Governmental Access Capital
16 Improvement Fund is hereby established in the State Treasury.
17 All television stations organized and operated to provide public
18 access, educational access or governmental access or a
19 combination of any of those services through a cable television
20 system shall qualify to receive grant money from the fund. Each
21 of the stations shall be established as a nonprofit corporation
22 under the laws of this Commonwealth or shall be organized
23 through a school district, intermediate unit, community college
24 or related public educational institution, public university or
25 political subdivision within this Commonwealth. Grants paid from
26 moneys of the fund shall be used for new equipment or other
27 capital improvements. The commission shall establish the forms
28 and regulations for awarding grant funding under this act. All
29 public access, educational access or governmental television
30 stations receiving funding must submit a form documenting how

1 the grant will specifically benefit the communities and the
2 residents that they serve.

3 Section 3. The sum of \$1,000,000 is hereby appropriated from
4 the General Fund to the Pennsylvania Public Television Network
5 Commission for transfer to the Public Access, Educational Access
6 and Governmental Access Capital Improvement Fund.

7 Section 4. This act shall take effect in 60 days.