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House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

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MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Rep. Doug Reichley

SUBJECT: Co-Sponsor Memo: Cable Converter Boxes (Prior HB 2050)

DATE: January 26, 2011

In the near future I plan to re-introduce legislation that would require municipal governments to negotiate, through franchise agreements, limits on the amount a cable provider can charge a subscriber for a cable converter box.

In 2010, cable providers switched from analog to digital signals, in an attempt to free more space for high-definition based channels. As a result of this change, some cable companies are now charging customers to rent signal converter boxes for each television set. The absence of a converter box may prohibit a customer from receiving all or a portion of the channels offered by their cable provider. Thus, customers are left with a choice, cut ties with their cable provider or pay an additional monthly fee.

With this in mind, my legislation would establish language which would require municipalities to negotiate the degree to which cable providers can charge customers for converter boxes, as part of their franchise agreement. Additionally, my legislation would permit cable providers to charge a fee for the first converter box a customer requires, but would prohibit the assessment of fees on additional converter boxes, limit five.

Please join me in my efforts to protect cable customers across Pennsylvania. If you wish to join me in my efforts, please contact my Harrisburg assistant Kendra Wiederhold at 787-1000 or kwiederh@pahousegop.com.