
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 258 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY HEFFLEY, R. MACKENZIE, GREINER, PICKETT, JAMES,
FLICK, BRENNAN AND NEILSON, NOVEMBER 8, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION, TECHNOLOGY AND
UTILITIES, NOVEMBER 8, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating November 13, 2023, as "Broadband Communications
2 Association of Pennsylvania Day" 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, Mr. Walson put an
14 antenna on top of a nearby mountain and television signals were
15 received and transported over twin-lead antenna wires directly
16 to his store; and

17 WHEREAS, Once local residents saw these early results,

1 television sales soared; and

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

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

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

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

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

19 WHEREAS, The wider variety of channels and clearer reception
20 the service offered soon attracted viewers from urban areas; and

21 WHEREAS, By 1962, nearly 800 cable systems were operational,
22 serving 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, the 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 more
4 than \$200 million; and

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

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

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

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate
19 November 13, 2023, as "Broadband Communications Association of
20 Pennsylvania Day" in Pennsylvania.