

April 19, 2022

The Honorable Sharon Quirk-Silva
Chair, Assembly Committee on Communications and Conveyance
Capitol Office, 1021 O Street, Suite 4210
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: Assembly Bill 2748 (Holden) Digital Equity and Video Franchising Act (DEVFA) - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Quirk-Silva and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Common Sense, co-sponsor of this legislation, I am writing to express our strong support for Assemblymember Holden's bill AB 2748, which will update the current Digital Infrastructure and Video Competition Act (DIVCA) by renaming it the Digital Equity and Video Franchising Act (DEVFA), reforming franchise licensing requirements as well as providing the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) with the flexibility to review and exercise greater authority over franchise holders.

DIVCA was passed in 2006 to encourage competition in the cable market which in turn would lower prices and increase choices as well as services for consumers, including greater access to high speed Internet. Roughly sixteen years later, it has become clear that DIVCA has fallen short of these goals, given the millions of Californians in urban, rural, and tribal areas that lack broadband access.

Currently, the CPUC has no authority to monitor and enforce digital equity within cable franchise agreements, leading to a patchwork of varying broadband access and Internet speeds that disproportionately affect rural, tribal, and low-income communities throughout our state. This practice, referred to as "digital redlining," provides further evidence that existing cable licensing laws allow internet service providers (ISPs) to prioritize profits over building out equitable service to all communities, particularly unserved and underserved neighborhoods.

The AB 2748 updates to DIVCA will improve competition among ISPs; ensure all Californians have the right of equal access to affordable, high speed internet services; strengthen anti-discrimination statutes and their enforcement provisions; and streamline franchise payments made to local governments.

For these reasons, Common Sense is proud to co-sponsor this measure and respectfully asks for your "Aye" vote on AB 2748.

Sincerely,



Marvin J. Deon II
Vice President, CA Policy, Common Sense Media