



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

For the Week of:
March 27, 2006

Contact: Aaron Baker
(573) 751-1507

Call Senator Stouffer Today...Cable Bill Meant to Increase Competition

Over the past few months many of you may have heard radio ads all over the state encouraging you to “Call Senator Stouffer today and tell him how frustrated you are with the cable companies.”

In addition to calls spurred by these ads and more, telephone companies have also been calling constituents asking them to leave a message for me in support of SB 816. They were recorded for weeks and then dumped into my voice mail in the wee hours of the morning, usually between 2 and 4 a.m.

When I would return to the office later each morning, there would be about 15 to 20 messages telling me to vote in favor of SB 816. Because I have received more than 150 calls about this bill, I thought it was time to let you know your voice has been heard; however, this issue is more complicated than increased cable competition.

SB 816 is designed to increase competition among cable and phone companies to provide quality television programming on demand. Phone companies would no longer have to make individual agreements with each of Missouri’s cable franchise areas in order to offer cable service. Instead, phone companies can apply for state-issued franchise licenses allowing them to enter multiple markets.

The most foreseeable outcome is cable prices will go down. As more businesses enter the market they will compete for customers, improve services and lower prices. I am sure many frustrated cable customers in Missouri will support that initiative.

Cable companies believe the increased competition is unfair because phone companies entering the market will be able to cherry-pick the most profitable areas in Missouri and leave others behind. Municipalities from around our district also do not like SB 816 because they believe it will take away local control and fees. For all of the complaining some may do about their local cable service, they do enjoy several benefits, including local access channels.

As always, I appreciate the phone calls and emails from both sides of this issue. Please continue to get involved in the process as it makes it easier for me to know where my constituents stand on important issues.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by email at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

-END-