

New Jersey Catholic Conference

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Executive Director

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A C T I O N A L E R T

A-804

ISSUE: A-804 is a bill about which you have heard through various commercials on local radio and television. It authorizes a statewide franchise for certain providers of cable television service. The bill is being heard in the Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee on Thursday, May 11th at 10AM.

OUR

POSITION: The New Jersey Catholic Conference and the New Jersey Network of Catholic School Families supports amending this bill. There are two sections in the bill which we want to see amended to include nonpublic schools. In the first one, on Page 24 Section j, the bill requires that a statewide franchise include “a commitment to retain or provide, without charge, one service outlet activated for basic service to any and all fire stations, public schools, police stations, public libraries, and other such buildings used for municipal purposes. In Section k, on Page 25, the language reads that the requirements shall be “a commitment to provide free Internet service, without charge, through one service outlet activated for basic service to any and all fire stations, public schools, police stations, public libraries, and other such buildings used for municipal purposes.”

Our goal is to have the language amended to remove the word “public” in front of “schools,” so that the bill would apply to public and nonpublic schools alike. Our schools serve municipal purposes in such areas as providing polling places during various elections, as well as fulfilling the basic requirements for K-12 education throughout the state. The parallel program involving our participation is the federal E-Rate program in which we and the public schools participate on an equitable basis.

Furthermore, there is no objection from the CATV companies to this requirement for our participation.

ACTION: It is necessary to call, E-mail, or fax the two co-sponsors of the legislation to ask for this amendment to be inserted on Thursday, May 11th. The co-sponsors are Assembly-

man Wilfredo Caraballo and Assemblyman Joseph Vas. They may be contacted as follows:

Representing the Archdiocese of Newark, Diocese of Camden, Diocese of Metuchen, Diocese of Paterson, Diocese of Trenton, Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic and Our Lady of Deliverance Syriac Catholic Diocese

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PLEASE ENACT THIS ALERT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

Thank you for your cooperation

GVC:sc