

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

April 5, 2016

The Honorable Loretta E. Lynch
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Attorney General Lynch and Chairman Wheeler:

We write to express our concern and urge you to consider the consequences of approving Charter Communication's proposed acquisition of Time Warner Cable and Bright House Networks (hereinafter "Charter-TWC merger"). If approved, the Charter-TWC merger would discourage industry competition, increase customer costs, reduce customer choice and hinder innovation.

The magnitude of the proposed merger would alter the broadband industry, and further limit consumer choices when purchasing high-speed internet. The Charter-TWC merger will further consolidate the telecommunications industry and give control over high-speed internet to only two companies: the newly-formed Charter and Comcast. These companies would then provide services to nearly 80 percent of American homes and curb any substantial competition from other cable and Internet providers.

Moreover, we ask you to reexamine how a merger of this magnitude will impact the public good and access to affordable broadband services. We are concerned that this merger would make broadband services less affordable because affected customers will have little choice but to buy Charter's already costly plans. In order to complete the deal, Charter plans to take on \$27 billion in new debt, which it will likely pass onto customers through increased rate adjustments. While all customers would see higher prices, low-income families and communities of color would be impacted the most. People in these communities already struggle to pay their cable and Internet bills, or simply live without Internet access. We are concerned that this proposed merger will expand the "digital divide" as more customers will have to choose between paying more than they can afford for broadband service or discontinuing service altogether.

Access to broadband service is necessary for finding jobs, participating in school, staying connected to family, paying bills, accessing medical information, and running a business. Broadband services must be affordable and available to all Americans, regardless of their income

or where they live. This will only be possible if we encourage broader participation in the telecommunications industry and prioritize the public interest when considering broadband provider consolidation.

We appreciate your willingness to oppose past mergers that limit competition and hope you will give the same careful attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Keith Ellison
Co-Chair, Congressional Progressive Caucus


Raúl M. Grijalva
Co-Chair, Congressional Progressive Caucus