



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 3, 2016

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
United States Senate
131 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Isakson:

Thank you for your letter expressing concern regarding the retransmission consent dispute between Heartland Media and AT&T/DirectTV. As you know, this dispute has been resolved.

Congress, in Section 325 of the Communications Act, sought to reduce the likelihood that TV viewers would be disadvantaged by contract disputes between broadcasters and multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs). The law requires broadcasters and MVPDs to negotiate for retransmission consent in good faith. Congress gave the Commission the authority to keep an eye on these negotiations, and our rules include a framework to determine whether broadcasters and MVPDs are negotiating in good faith.

Many broadcasters and MVPDs take that responsibility seriously and conclude hundreds of retransmission consent deals without interruption. And this process is entirely invisible to their viewers – as it should be. That's not to say, however, that impasses like the one between Heartland Media and AT&T/DirectTV won't happen. And when they do, I am prepared to use the authority Congress has conferred on the Commission to help to bring negotiations to a conclusion.

At this time, I am aware of no evidence to suggest that either party violated our rules, and I am pleased that the parties resolved their dispute. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler".

Tom Wheeler