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## **Ministerial Alliance Urges Illinois House Telecommunications Committee to Promptly Pass House Bill 1500**

**CHICAGO, IL - The following statement can be attributed to Reverend James L Demus III, co-director of the Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide (MAADD):**

“The Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide urges the Illinois House Telecommunications Committee to follow in the footsteps of other states such as Michigan, Indiana and Texas and pass legislation that would allow new providers to efficiently enter the local video market to provide alternatives to traditional cable television service. By introducing competition in this monopoly controlled market, consumers will witness the end of the cable industry’s era of annual rate hikes and poor service due to a lack of choice.”

“Unfortunately, despite the consumer benefits, the cable industry is using unscrupulous tactics to thwart pro-consumer video franchise legislation in Illinois. These shenanigans include using scare tactics with third-party interests to gain support in their effort to oppose House Bill 1500. These scare tactics equate competition to redlining minority communities, the elimination of public, educational and government access channels, and the reduction of revenues to municipalities. What the cable industry is not sharing with these interested parties is that all of these issues are cared for and protected in the language of the legislation.”

“The cable conglomerates have been playing this game of ‘smoke and mirrors’ because maintaining market power is in their best interest. Today, the large cable companies are bleeding consumers dry with consistent annual rate hikes – which are on average 7.5% each year. In fact, there have been examples in other states where the mere presence of competition in the video market has caused consumer rates to immediately plummet by 25%!”

“We applaud the sponsors of this legislation for having the foresight to understand that Illinois consumers need a break from ever escalating cable bills. We urge the members of the House Telecommunications Committee to support House Bill 1500 and bring Illinois consumers real savings that they can take to the bank.”

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*The Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide (MAADD) is a 15,000+ member civil rights organization led by ministers that is devoted to bridging the digital divide between those who have ready access to technology and those who do not.*