

**TeleTruth Wisconsin Press Conference  
July 11, 2007, 10:00 a.m., Senate Parlor**

The League of Women Voters believes our democracy is only as good as our citizen participation. As voters, and as citizens, people need reliable information to make wise choices. The League uses Public Access channels around Wisconsin and the nation to shine a light on issues and candidates and to create an informed electorate. We oppose this legislation because it would – over not so much time – gut funding for Public Access.

But it's worse than that.

The flawed process by which this bill has been developed and moved through the Legislature is a perfect example of why we need openness and reliable information about our government.

The bill was written behind closed doors by national corporate interests – the very interests that will not be held accountable to state or local government should the bill pass. There was no input from public access channels, or private consumers and citizens, until after the legislation had been written and introduced. The Legislature should seek input from people who *use* the services, not just people who sell them!

Proponents of the bill claim there is grassroots support, but let's take a closer look. Our representatives in the Legislature have received large binders of so-called "supporters" from an organization called TV4US. If you Google this organization, be sure to type in "Wisconsin" or you'll get the listings for a lot of other states where AT&T is trying to pass legislation. TV4US calls itself "a nonprofit, grassroots coalition advocating on behalf of customers." Yet they have to manufacture their grassroots by listing so-called "supporters" who don't know their names are on the list – and some who actively *oppose* the legislation!

Our representatives in the Capitol can't believe what they see in these binders, because the sponsors of this effort are not being truthful. And we can't believe them either. Next time you see one of those ads telling you to call your Senator and urge him or her to support this bill, be skeptical. Consider the source of these efforts and why they are willing to spend so much money on slick ads – not just in Wisconsin but in many states.

There are experts here today who can tell you why this bill won't create jobs, why it won't encourage competition, how it will hurt local governments, and why it won't bring down rates for consumers. I can only tell you that it's bad for democracy. It will gut funding for Public Access channels, which in a sense, may be the only true "public" forum among current media options.

Proponents of this bill have not been truthful with us or with our representatives in the Capitol. We should scrap this bill and start over – and this time use the democratic process.

Andrea Kaminski, Executive Director  
League of Women Voters of Wisconsin