

SUBSCRIPTION TELEVISION

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1967

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND POWER,
COMMITTEE ON INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 10 a.m., pursuant to notice, in room 2322, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Torbert H. Macdonald (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. MACDONALD. The hearing will come to order.

We are honored this morning by having the dean of the Democratic Party here in the house to testify before us, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, the Honorable Emanuel Celler of New York.

It is a great pleasure to see you here.

STATEMENT OF HON. EMANUEL CELLER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. CELLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the rest of the members of the committee.

We usually say one man with courage is a majority. I can say two men with courage is a majority now.

Gentlemen, I appreciate the opportunity of appearing before this committee which throughout this week has been earnestly probing the critical problems raised by H.R. 12435, a bill which would, by amendment of the Communications Act, preclude the FCC from authorizing the broadcast of pay television programs.

The proposed fourth order and report transmitted by the panel of three FCC Commissioners constituting the Subscription Television Committee, recommends that the Commission establish an over-the-air subscription television—STV—service for the Nation and adopt certain rules governing that service.

This would entail authorizing the exaction of fees for program reception which could affect a potential 80 percent—I repeat 80 percent—of the country's television set owners.

I appeared before the full Commission and urged that it reject this departure from our traditional system of free program reception, and leave inviolate the spectrum devoted to public broadcast frequencies.

Just so, I appear here today and urge this subcommittee to approve the principle of H.R. 12435 which would prevent the inauguration and establishment of subscription TV.

In my view, the developments of the past 12 years, since the FCC has been stewing over subscription television—including the experimental pay television broadcast operations conducted in Hartford,