



# NATIONAL GRANGE

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*American Values. Hometown Roots.*

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September 23, 2019

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Chairman  
The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce,  
Science and Transportation  
United States Senate

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Chairman  
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr  
Chairman  
The Honorable Greg Walden  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler  
Chairman  
The Honorable Doug Collins  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States House of Representatives

Re: Support for STELAR Act reauthorization

Dear Chairmen Wicker, Graham, Pallone, Nadler and Ranking Members Cantwell, Feinstein, Walden, Collins:

When it comes to obtaining access to basic services, rural communities are prone to experiencing gaps or interruptions. Television content is unfortunately no different. Unless Congress moves quickly to reauthorize the of Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act Reauthorization (STELAR), over 870,000 satellite TV customers, mostly in rural areas, will lose basic protections that afford them access to basic broadcast network programming in places where over-the-air signals can't reach.

Rural residents should not be needlessly punished and their access to network entertainment should not be curtailed because they live in a less convenient area to service. Therefore, the National Grange urges your support for prompt STELAR reauthorization before it expires on December 31, 2019. This important legislation will help preserve the connectivity of hardworking, rural communities by providing them access to local news, sports, and other programming of their choice.

Technical limitations make it difficult for many residents in small towns and rural communities to watch broadcasting from one of the “big four” networks without STELAR reauthorization. STELAR contains a key provision that enables satellite and pay-TV providers to import broadcast signals to these communities *without interruption*.

Our members depend on STELAR not just to access network programming, but also to keep their service affordable because STELAR encourages good-faith negotiations between broadcasters and satellite providers. This law’s importance cannot be overstated: its provisions serve as the single set of rules that help to protect consumers from programming “blackouts,” which broadcasters deploy to extract retransmission fee increases from rural residents and small businesses.

Congress must take prompt action to ensure that STELAR’s protections remain in place. This law’s reauthorization has always had strong bipartisan support; when STELAR was last considered in 2014 it passed Congress unanimously. Reauthorization before the law expires at the end of this year will demonstrate that Congress is truly committed to preserving rural Americans’ access to information and entertainment.

Sincerely,

Betsy E. Huber  
President