

**Testimony Supporting S. B. 677,
An Act Concerning Providers of Telecommunications Services, Level of
Technology for Stations and Upgrading Equipment**

**Testimony Supporting H.B. 6419,
An Act Concerning Providers of Community Access Channels and
Levels of Service**

Energy and Technology Committee

February 19, 2019

Senator Needleman, Representative Arconti, Senator Formica, Representative Charles, and distinguished members of the Energy and Technology Committee. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is grateful for this opportunity to submit written testimony **in support of S. B. 677, An Act Concerning Providers of Telecommunications Services, Level of Technology for Stations and Upgrading Equipment, and H.B. 6419, An Act Concerning Providers of Community Access Channels and Levels of Service.**

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford region. As a community foundation, we manage, grow, and distribute approximately \$1 billion in assets to promote equitable opportunity for all residents in our region, particularly in the areas of education, community safety, and community and economic development. The Hartford Foundation has been a long-time supporter of Greater Hartford's public access television providers that deliver a vital, free outlet for diverse public expression while also providing residents with access to information about their towns and local government. The availability of this information is vital to having a well-informed and engaged citizenry. In addition, local cable access providers offer training and support residents and students to produce their own content. Over the past several years, the Foundation has provided significant financial support to several local access channels to upgrade outdated equipment to allow local cable access providers the ability to offer their content online and provide high definition-quality content to be carried by local cable providers.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving strongly supports S.B. 677 and H.B. 6419 that seek to ensure that cable companies provide local cable access channels the same level of service provided to other video program providers. The Foundation believes that the legislature must take action to ensure that cable service providers respond to changes in technology and afford the same treatment to our state's local cable access providers as they offer all other cable programming providers.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our staff at policy@hfp.org or 860-548-1888.