



We write to express our strong support of AB 41, the the Digital Equity in Video Franchising Act of 2023 (DEVFA), which advances long overdue reforms to the 2006 California franchise law, known as DIVCA.

AB41 addresses critical issues with equitable access to services offered by holders of state franchises, creates a transparent and fair process for once-a-decade franchise renewals, and establishes a mechanism for California customers to make the commission aware of service quality issues.

DIVCA was passed in 2006 to encourage competition in the cable market with the intent of benefiting consumers with lower prices, better services - video and broadband that is offered over the same wires - and expanded access to broadband. More than 15 years later, DIVCA has fallen well short of its promises:

- **Competition has decreased in the years since DIVCA went into effect.** Over the last decade the percentage of California households with access to two or more providers has plunged from 80% to 65%.
- **Prices for California cable service have increased since the advent of DIVCA,** in the case of at least one franchise holder by more than 150%.
- **Hundreds of thousands of families across California lack access to service, most of them within the service areas of state franchise holders.**

DIVCA’s outdated anti-discrimination provisions and lack of equal access policy have led to a persistent and troubling gap in broadband connectivity across the state - responsible for a large part of what we refer to as the “digital divide.” In fact, the gap in access between wealthy and low-income Californians has been largely unchanged over the past two decades.

The digital divide affects all kinds of California communities, rural, suburban, and urban alike. AB41 makes equal access the official policy of the states only franchising authority, defines anti-discrimination in clear and actionable ways, and creates an open and transparent process for franchising that allows for public engagement.

We represent a broad and deep coalition of equity advocates working across the state and across issues. We are educators, health care providers, economic opportunity engines, community leaders, and above all, service providers and advocates for Californians that have too often been left behind. We have seen and experienced first-hand the urgent need to close the digital divide in our communities.

Together, we educate and advocate for fast, reliable, and affordable broadband for everyone, and we enthusiastically support AB 41.

We thank you for your leadership on this critical statewide issue.

Sincerely,

- Patrick Messac, Project Director, #OaklandUndivided
- Sean Taketa McLaughlin, Executive Director, Access Humboldt
- Davis Diaz, MPH, Executive Director , Active San Gabriel Valley
- Vanessa Aramayo, Executive Director, Alliance for a Better Community
- Sue Buske, Board of Directors, Alliance for Community Media, Western Region
- Terry Andruess, Trustee, Altadena Library District
- Berenice Nuñez Constant, Senior Vice President, Government Relations and Civic Engagement, AltaMed Health Services
- Shayna Englin, Director, Digital Equity Initiative, California Community Foundation
- Lead- Maria Villamil, California Native Vote Project
- Dr. Alicia Montgomery, CEO, Center for Powerful Public Schools
- Kami Peer, State Policy Associate, Common Sense Media
- Paola Schenkelberg, External Affairs Director , Communities In Schools of Los Angeles (CISLA)
- Joanne Preece, Director of Government & External Affairs, Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County (CCALAC)
- Eric Ohlsen, Executive Director , Community Coalition of the Antelope Valley
- Jason Foster, President & COO, Destination Crenshaw, Destination Crenshaw
- Claudia Oliveira, DTLA Chamber of Commerce
- Chao Jun Liu, Legislative Associate, Electronic Frontier Foundation
- Norma E. Fernandez, CEO, EveryoenOn
- Dr. Ana Ponce, Executive Director, GPSN
- Jorge Rivera, Executive Co-Director, Healing and Justice Center
- Henry Perez, Executive Director, InnerCity Struggle
- Hannah Gravette, Regional Vice President, Innovate Public Schools
- Christopher Mitchell, Program Director, Community Broadband Networks Initiative, Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR)
- Kimberly Fabian, Program Manager, Kid City Hope Place
- Eddie Martinez, Executive Director, Latino Equality Alliance
- Joni Angel, Executive Director, Los Angeles Coalition for Excellent Public Schools
- Patrick Gittisriboongul, Asst. Superintendent Technology & Innovation, Lynwood Unified School District
- Tracy Rosenberg, Executive Director, Media Alliance
- Brandon Forester, Organizer, MediaJustice
- Geoffrey Baum, Executive Director, Michelson Center for Public Policy
- Arnold Sowell, Executive Director, NextGen Policy
- Evelyn Aleman, Founder, Our Voice: Communities for Quality Education
- Veronica Padilla, Executive Director, Pacoima Beautiful
- Drew Furedi, President and CEO, Para Los Niños
- Emma Hernandez, Chief Executive Officer , Southeast Community Development Corporation
- Maddie Ribble, Policy Director, Social Drivers of Health, The Children's Partnership
- Amy Cortinas, Senior Vice President, Strategic Partnerships, UNITE LA
- Larry Fondation, Executive Director, United Parents and Students, United Parents and Students
- Mario Valenzuela, Senior Vice President of Equity, Inclusion, & Social Impact, YMCA of Metropolitan LA