

# WAPC



## Wisconsin Association of PEG Channels

Serving the needs of public, education, and government cable access television stations since 1998.

For Immediate Release  
March 25, 2010

Contact: Mary Cardona  
Executive Director  
608-215-5594  
wapc@tds.net

### Representative Montgomery Wrong Again on Facts of Video Bill

Wisconsin State Representative Phil Montgomery (R- Ashwaubenon) “once again has his facts wrong” on the impact of Assembly Bill 721, better known as the “Save Our Community Television Bill,” which was approved on Wednesday by the Assembly Committee on Urban and Local Affairs, according to Mary Cardona, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Association of PEG Channels.

“By referring to the provision in the bill which would preserve existing funding mechanisms for community television as a ‘new tax,’ Rep. Montgomery purposefully forgets that these fees, which are in effect user fees paid *only* by cable subscribers, already exist and have existed for decades,” said Cardona. “What’s more, should Rep. Montgomery’s position on this bill prevail, many communities would be forced to raise property taxes on *all* their citizens in order to continue funding these stations. It’s therefore ironic that Rep. Montgomery accuses the bipartisan supporters of Assembly Bill 721 of promoting a new tax, when, in fact, the only way that taxes could be raised on any Wisconsin citizens as a result of this debate is if Wisconsin Act 42, the so-called ‘Video Competition Act,’ which Rep. Montgomery sponsored, is *not* amended by AB 721.”

WAPC represents 63 community television channels throughout the state of Wisconsin. These channels provide coverage of local government meetings, high school sports, and other local events.

“With the shrinking resources being devoted to coverage of local issues and local events by the traditional news media, these community channels are more important to Wisconsin citizens than ever,” stated Cardona. “Existing funding mechanisms, which were created and approved by local elected officials, not state bureaucrats, amount to an average of less than 60 cents per cable subscriber per month. If these funding formulas lapse, beginning in 2011, Wisconsin residents may lose many of these channels and the local coverage they bring, but they certainly won’t see any decrease in their monthly bills, which have only *increased* since the passage of Wisconsin Act 42 – directly contrary to the promises of Rep. Montgomery and other supporters of Act 42.”

Assembly Bill 721 and its companion legislation, Senate Bill 582, enjoy bipartisan support in the State Legislature and are supported by several organizations that initially backed Act 42, including Citizen Action, the State’s premier consumer protection organization; Communication Workers of America Locals 4603 (Milwaukee) and 4622 (Oshkosh); and the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups.