

March 26, 2008

Dear Members of the General Assembly,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing today to encourage your support of HJR 1013, the resolution encouraging education about the digital television transition. We believe public education is necessary to ensure that every Coloradan has access to the information they need to effectively participate in our democracy.

In 2005, Congress *mandated* that all over-the-air broadcasters must switch to digital formatting instead of analog by February 17, 2009. This change will have major implications on Americans' ability to access news and emergency information through broadcast television stations.

Coloradans who do not have cable, satellite service, or digital televisions will need a converter box to maintain access to the broadcast stations they currently receive. The federal government will provide \$40 coupons for the converter boxes - this will not provide access to cable stations such as MTV. It simply ensures that people do not lose access to their broadcast TV stations.

Colorado has a duty to educate every Coloradan about this change to ensure people have the opportunity to turn on the TV for news and emergency information. If we do not educate Coloradans about this, an estimated 15% of the population will be left in the dark.

The reality is, most Americans either don't know or have *major* misconceptions about how the digital transition will affect them. We have to take important steps to educate Coloradans. If we do not, people are going to go without important information or unnecessarily pay for new high-priced televisions.

The digital transition will have disproportionate impacts on specific communities, including low-income Coloradans, people of color, people with disabilities, older people and residents of the many rural areas of the state.

House Joint Resolution 1013 will help educate Coloradans about this impending change and the options available to make sure that everyone maintains access to basic television programming, including news and emergency bulletins. We urge you to support on House Joint Resolution 1013.

If you have questions or there is other information we can provide, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Elena Nunez, Colorado Common Cause  
Cathryn Hazouri, American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado (ACLU)  
Kirpal Singh, Colorado Public Interest Research Group (CoPIRG)  
Erica Swanson, Leadership Council on Civil Rights (LCCR)  
Kelli Fritts, AARP of Colorado