

Chairmen Dingell, Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet Hearing entitled, "Competition in the Sports Programming Marketplace"

Statement of Congressman John D. Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE INTERNET HEARING ENTITLED, "COMPETITION IN THE SPORTS
PROGRAMMING MARKETPLACE"
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From the 1947 World Series between the Brooklyn Dodgers and the Cincinnati Reds, to Billie Jean King beating Bobby Riggs, to the USA Olympic Hockey team beating the USSR, right up to the New York Giants recently beating Chairman Markey's beloved New England Patriots in the latest Super Bowl, many of this country's greatest sporting events have been broadcast free on over-the-air television for all consumers to enjoy.

My constituents in Michigan have reveled in the broadcast of Michigan/Ohio State football clashes, the historic interstate basketball rivalries between the Wolverines and the Spartans, and the triumphs and travails of our professional teams, the Tigers, Red Wings, Pistons, and most recently, our women's basketball team, the Detroit Shock. Our high hopes for our Detroit Lions remain, well, perpetual.

My constituents are no different from those in other districts that are home to collegiate or professional teams: we all want to watch our teams compete.

Today's hearing asks whether these events will continue to be removed from free, over-the-air broadcast television to the detriment of our local communities. Monday Night Football has moved from network television to ESPN. While new conference networks like the Big Ten Network are airing more college sporting events like lacrosse and field hockey, they are also shifting college football games away from broadcast television.

Taxpayers have a vested interest in this question. Taxpayers finance public universities and approve public financing for professional sport venues. Cities, counties, and States have provided support in other ways, including financial incentives and the use of public resources. It is therefore logical and fair that taxpayers should be able to enjoy the fruits of their investments and continue to see local teams in free, over-the-air broadcasts.

I am concerned by the ever increasing migration of sports programming to pay TV. I hope to hear assurances from today's witnesses that marquee sporting events will remain available on free, over-the-air broadcast television. I urge my colleagues to keep a close eye on this disturbing trend.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce
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