

accountability to these franchises. For that reason I put the amendment on saying that there would be public hearings on rate increases. I still believe that there should be public hearings on cable rate increases. I do not think that that is a burden to the tax payers. I do not see these extensive hearings but I do believe that there should be an opportunity for comment. For that reason I put the amendments on. I would hope that they could stay on so that in this bill that we are now taking away one right of the people, that is to vote on a franchise we could put in some other guarantee. Now in response to concerns from the cable industry I did put on a grandfather clause, so that those existing franchise agreements that might have different provisions would not be affected. In so doing I thought that would remove whatever objections the existing cable operators would have. I guess that basically what they are opposed to is the philosophy of any public accountability. If they were not a monopoly I do not understand why they need franchises. It seems to me that they want a special government grant and a special privilege for their company but they don't want any public accountability. I would hope that you would continue to provide a certain amount of public accountability for this industry. There is no state regulation. The only way that this is regulated is at the local level. It does not seem to me to ask that this industry, which I believe will be a major communications industry, have a public hearing on its rates. I would oppose Senator Haberman's motion.

PRESIDENT: Chair recognizes Senator Cope.

SENATOR COPE: Mr. President, members. I would support Senator Haberman's amendment. I have heard from the two cities in my district that have cable TV and I have heard not from the cable television itself as much as from the cities. It is simply this, that they are getting along very well with the cable television communication system. They have no problems. This would add considerable work, these two hearings, it is going to cost some additional money. There is no question about it. It is just one more layer of bureaucracy that we are adding. Now if there were problems between cities and the cable television there would be, there is the possibility that it would be good, but certainly in my area there is no problem and the cities, of course, at least the two that I represent, say that these were added on Select File so that they had no chance on the committee hearing to rebutt it and give their side of the picture. So that is what I am doing. Talking for local government and not adding more burdens to that governmental subdivision.