

# Cable execs fear higher content prices

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Cable-television providers are urging Congress to protect their access to popular programming at fair prices.

Testimony at Wednesday's Senate Judiciary subcommittee hearings proposed regulations on "must have" programming so that new cable providers will be able to enter the market and maintain a level of competition.

Peter Aquino, president of cable and broadband provider RCN, testified that mergers in the cable industry had placed increasing levels of content in the hands of fewer companies, many of which run their own cable operations.

"Roughly 32 percent of our programming dollars currently go to programmers affiliated with Comcast and Time Warner," Aquino testified. "As their control over 'must have' sports and other programming grows, so too does their ability to raise rates to the point that competitors are simply driven out of the market."

Aquino called on lawmakers to seek an FCC investigation into content rates and remind regulators to keep the price of content in mind when considering future merger proposals.

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