

1980

The FCC repeals rules which limit a cable systems' ability to import distant signals and the rules which require program exclusivity on local cable systems.

1981

In *Malrite v. FCC*, a federal appellate court upholds the FCC repeal of the distant signal and program exclusivity rules. (652 F.2d 1140 (2d Cir.1981), *cert. denied*, 454 U.S. 1143 (1982))

1982

State laws requiring cable access to apartment buildings constitute a fifth amendment "taking" and require just compensation, the U.S. Supreme Court rules. (*Loretto v. TelePrompTer Manhattan*, 458 U.S. 418)

The U.S. Supreme Court restrict states' regulation of cable content. (*Capital Cities v. Crisp*, 467 U.S. 691)

The U.S. Supreme Court holds that cities are not necessarily protected from antitrust laws in the cable franchising process. (*Community Communications Co., Inc. v. City of Boulder*, 455 U.S. 40)

1982

In response to FCC lifting syndicated exclusivity and distant signal rules, the Copyright Royalty Tribunal sets a rate at 3.75% of gross basic subscriber revenue for each Distant Signal Equivalent. As an unintended consequence, this stimulates development of non-broadcast programming.

1984

U.S. District Court Judge Harold Greene approves the Modified Final Judgment (MFJ) consent decree which breaks up AT&T. The network distribution system is separated into seven regional bell operating companies (RBOCs). The long-distance carrier and the research businesses continue to be called AT&T.

The Cable Communications Policy Act--the first comprehensive legislation affecting the cable industry--is passed. It relaxes rate regulation, provides for orderly franchise renewals and stimulates programming development.

Deregulation of basic rates for cable service takes effect under the 1984 Cable Act.

1985

The U.S. Court of Appeals strikes down FCC rules requiring cable operators to carry all local broadcast signals. The court holds the rules violate cable's First Amendment rights. (*Quincy Cable Television v. FCC*, 768 F.2d 1434 (D.C. Cir.))

1986

The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Preferred Communications v. Los Angeles*, holds that cable operators are entitled to some First Amendment protection, but declines to specify the extent of that protection. (476 U.S. 488)

1986

The FCC adopts revised must carry rules in response to the 1985 *Quincy Cable Television v. FCC* decision.

1987

The U.S. Court of Appeals rejects the FCC's revised must carry rules on First Amendment grounds. (*Century Communications v. FCC*, 835 F.2d (D.C. Cir.1987), *cert. denied*, 486 U.S. 1032 (1988))

1988

The FCC issues orders to reinstate syndicated exclusivity. This gives broadcasters the right to request that local cable systems "black out" certain programs carried by distant stations.