

## Federal Communications Commission

## § 76.206

make any contract or other agreement which shall have the effect of permitting any legally qualified candidate for any public office to cablecast to the exclusion of other legally qualified candidates for the same public office.

[57 FR 210, Jan. 3, 1992, as amended at 59 FR 14568, Mar. 29, 1994]

### § 76.206 Candidate rates.

(a) *Charges for use of cable television systems.* The charges, if any, made for the use of any system by any person who is a legally qualified candidate for any public office in connection with his or her campaign for nomination for election, or election, to such office shall not exceed:

(1) During the 45 days preceding the date of a primary or primary runoff election and during the 60 days preceding the date of a general or special election in which such person is a candidate, the lowest unit charge of the system for the same class and amount of time for the same period.

(i) A candidate shall be charged no more per unit than the system charges its most favored commercial advertisers for the same classes and amounts of time for the same periods. Any system practices offered to commercial advertisers that enhance the value of advertising spots must be disclosed and made available to candidates upon equal terms. Such practices include but are not limited to any discount privileges that affect the value of advertising, such as bonus spots, time-sensitive make goods, preemption priorities, or any other factors that enhance the value of the announcement.

(ii) The Commission recognizes non-preemptible, preemptible with notice, immediately preemptible and run-of-schedule as distinct classes of time.

(iii) Systems may establish and define their own reasonable classes of immediately preemptible time so long as the differences between such classes are based on one or more demonstrable benefits associated with each class and are not based solely upon price or identity of the advertiser. Such demonstrable benefits include, but are not limited to, varying levels of preemption protection, scheduling flexibility, or associated privileges, such as guaranteed time-sensitive make goods. Sys-

tems may not use class distinctions to defeat the purpose of the lowest unit charge requirement. All classes must be fully disclosed and made available to candidates.

(iv) Systems may establish reasonable classes of preemptible with notice time so long as they clearly define all such classes, fully disclose them and make them available to candidates.

(v) Systems may treat non-preemptible and fixed position as distinct classes of time provided that systems articulate clearly the differences between such classes, fully disclose them, and make them available to candidates.

(vi) Systems shall not establish a separate, premium-priced class of time sold only to candidates. Systems may sell higher-priced non-preemptible or fixed time to candidates if such a class of time is made available on a *bona fide* basis to both candidates and commercial advertisers, and provided such class is not functionally equivalent to any lower-priced class of time sold to commercial advertisers.

(vii) [Reserved]

(viii) Lowest unit charge may be calculated on a weekly basis with respect to time that is sold on a weekly basis, such as rotations through particular programs or dayparts. Systems electing to calculate the lowest unit charge by such a method must include in that calculation all rates for all announcements scheduled in the rotation, including announcements aired under long-term advertising contracts. Systems may implement rate increases during election periods only to the extent that such increases constitute "ordinary business practices," such as seasonal program changes or changes in audience ratings.

(ix) Systems shall review their advertising records periodically throughout the election period to determine whether compliance with this section requires that candidates receive rebates or credits. Where necessary, systems shall issue such rebates or credits promptly.

(x) Unit rates charged as part of any package, whether individually negotiated or generally available to all advertisers, must be included in the lowest unit charge calculation for the

same class and length of time in the same time period. A candidate cannot be required to purchase advertising in every program or daypart in a package as a condition for obtaining package unit rates.

(xi) Systems are not required to include non-cash promotional merchandising incentives in lowest unit charge calculations; provided, however, that all such incentives must be offered to candidates as part of any purchases permitted by the system. Bonus spots, however, must be included in the calculation of the lowest unit charge calculation.

(xii) Make goods, defined as the rescheduling of preempted advertising, shall be provided to candidates prior to election day if a system has provided a time-sensitive make good during the year preceding the pre-election periods, respectively set forth in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, to any commercial advertiser who purchased time in the same class.

(xiii) Systems must disclose and make available to candidates any make good policies provided to commercial advertisers. If a system places a make good for any commercial advertiser or other candidate in a more valuable program or daypart, the value of such make good must be included in the calculation of the lowest unit charge for that program or daypart.

(2) At any time other than the respective periods set forth in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, systems may charge legally qualified candidates for public office no more than the charges made for comparable use of the system by commercial advertisers. The rates, if any, charged all such candidates for the same office shall be uniform and shall not be rebated by any means, direct or indirect. A candidate shall be charged no more than the rate the system would charge for comparable commercial advertising. All discount privileges otherwise offered by a system to commercial advertisers must be disclosed and made available upon equal terms to all candidates for public office.

(b) If a system permits a candidate to use its cablecast facilities, the system shall make all discount privileges offered to commercial advertisers, in-

cluding the lowest unit charges for each class and length of time in the same time period and all corresponding discount privileges, available on equal terms to all candidates. This duty includes an affirmative duty to disclose to candidates information about rates, terms, conditions and all value-enhancing discount privileges offered to commercial advertisers, as provided in § 76.1611. Systems may use reasonable discretion in making the disclosure; provided, however, that the disclosure includes, at a minimum, the following information:

(1) A description and definition of each class of time available to commercial advertisers sufficiently complete enough to allow candidates to identify and understand what specific attributes differentiate each class;

(2) A description of the lowest unit charge and related privileges (such as priorities against preemption and make goods prior to specific deadlines) for each class of time offered to commercial advertisers;

(3) A description of the system's method of selling preemptible time based upon advertiser demand, commonly known as the "current selling level," with the stipulation that candidates will be able to purchase at these demand-generated rates in the same manner as commercial advertisers;

(4) An approximation of the likelihood of preemption for each kind of preemptible time; and

(5) An explanation of the system's sales practices, if any, that are based on audience delivery, with the stipulation that candidates will be able to purchase this kind of time, if available to commercial advertisers.

(c) Once disclosure is made, systems shall negotiate in good faith to actually sell time to candidates in accordance with the disclosure.

[57 FR 210, Jan. 3, 1992, as amended at 57 FR 27709, June 22, 1992; 65 FR 53615, Sept. 5, 2000]

**§ 76.209 Fairness doctrine; personal attacks; political editorials.**

A cable television system operator engaging in origination cablecasting shall afford reasonable opportunity for the discussion of conflicting views on issues of public importance.