Attorney General James Helps to Ensure Delivery of Approximately $76 Million in Rebates to 4 Million New Yorkers Charged Fees for Sports Programming Never Provided During COVID-19 Pandemic

Tens of Millions of Dollars More in Relief Expected for New York Consumers This Year

AG James Sent Letters to Seven Major Cable and Satellite Providers in New York Last April Demanding a Refund of Fees Until Live Sports Returned

NEW YORK – New York Attorney General Letitia James today announced that nearly 4 million cable and satellite television subscribers across New York state have received approximately $76 million in rebates after they were charged for live sports programming last year during the peak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic even though all live sports events had been cancelled. In response to news reports highlighting the problem, last April, **Attorney General James sent seven major cable and satellite television providers in New York letters**, demanding they provide financial relief to consumers by reducing or eliminating fees attributable to live sports programming. After discussions with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), the seven companies — Altice USA, AT&T Inc., Charter Communications, Comcast Cable, DISH Network, RCN Corporation, and Verizon Communications — committed to passing on to their customers rebates being sought from regional sports networks, which in turn were negotiating rebates from leagues and teams that were not partaking in live sporting events.

“After a year where so many have suffered the devastating economic impacts of COVID-19, my office is proud to announce approximately $76 million that has been delivered directly to New Yorkers,” said **Attorney General James**. “No one should be forced to pay for something they aren’t receiving, especially during a pandemic that has impacted the finances of millions across our state. I’m glad that these seven cable and satellite companies are doing the right thing by delivering substantial relief to consumers. New Yorkers can trust that I will always fight to protect their wallets.”

Last March, almost overnight, live sporting events ceased to take place. At the same time, millions of cable and satellite television consumers were signed up for costly television packages that were supposed to include coverage of live sports. Despite complaints from consumers, many of these companies continued to charge and collect high fees for live sports programming and refused to reduce the cost of packages that normally included live sports.

After Attorney General James expressed her concerns to these seven providers, the OAG engaged in discussions with the different cable and satellite companies in an effort to secure substantial financial relief for New Yorkers. The discussions revealed a complex chain of contracts between the cable and satellite companies and various leagues, teams, and regional sports networks. While any rebates

provided by the leagues and teams were supposed to eventually be passed to networks, including to regional sports networks, and then to distributors and, finally, to the public, the initial rebates and flow-through were slow to materialize, resulting in substantial delays to consumers.

Attorney General James has now confirmed, at least, a first round of refunds for lost live sports programming, totaling approximately $76 million for nearly 4 million New York subscribers at the seven cable and satellite television companies.

The approximately $76 million in relief has already been delivered to consumers in the form of refunds, rebates, and credits.

While Attorney General James continues to press for prompt additional relief for customers, her discussions have resulted in additional commitments from the companies, totaling tens of millions of dollars more in relief that will be delivered later this year.

This matter was handled by Special Counsel for Economic Justice Steven Glassman, under the supervision of Chief Deputy Attorney General Chris D'Angelo and First Deputy Attorney General Jennifer Levy.

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