

Cable companies can no longer 'rent' you the router you already own

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Frontier was charging \$10 a month for absolutely nothing

By [Sean Hollister](#) | [@StarFire2258](#) | Dec 19, 2020, 8:03pm EST



Is your internet service provider charging you every month for the cable modem or router that *you purchased with your own money*? Or, perhaps, have you never bothered to buy those items because you couldn't escape the fee? That fee is illegal starting Sunday, December 20th, and you should tell your ISP that you'll no longer tolerate it.

Last year, Congress passed a law that should have fixed this ridiculous loophole as of June 20th, 2020 — and though the FCC [managed to extend the deadline six months](#) by spinning up some bullshit about how cable companies [didn't have the resources to stop charging you money](#), the law should take full effect tomorrow.

Do note that [the actual text of the law](#) still allows some BS to occur. If your ISP sends you a router, you'll need to return it to avoid charges.

"WHETHER YOU USE IT OR NOT"

Frontier in particular has been notorious for charging customers \$10 a month for their equipment “whether you use it or not” — the company’s words, not mine — but Frontier is clearly aware it won’t be able to do that anymore. Starting this month, [the company’s equipment page](#) has changed to remove the part where it talks about the mandatory fee. [Here’s an archived copy of the site from last month](#) if you want to compare.

If you can purchase your own cable modem, I suggest you do. Modems will generally pay for themselves in less than a year, and the all-in-one router boxes that ISPs typically provide typically offer worse Wi-Fi coverage than you could easily add to a house yourself, particularly now that mesh Wi-Fi systems are better, cheaper, and easier to use than ever before.

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It also doesn't help that in the US, we pay roughly eight to 17 times more to rent a modem on average than Asia and Europe do, respectively. That's just [one of the ways America's internet needs to be fixed in 2021](#).