



**National Association
of Hispanic Journalists**

October 10, 2007

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

The National Association of Hispanic Journalists supports FCC Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein's call for the creation of an independent minority broadcast ownership task force that examines policies to increase minority ownership. The NAHJ Board of Directors unanimously approved a resolution that also calls on the FCC to refrain from issuing new broadcast ownership rules until the work of the task force is complete and minority ownership opportunities are addressed.

NAHJ has for years expressed its concern about the future of minority ownership. We have stated that we believe the future of minority ownership continues to be in peril unless the FCC begins to address the issue. It is time to act now.

Last year, we were surprised to learn that accurate data on minority owners did not exist. NAHJ sent a letter of inquiry to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration in April 2006 asking whether the agency planned to conduct another minority broadcast ownership study. The agency had conducted a study on minority ownership every two years since 1990. However, the last report the agency released was in December 2000.

The NTIA responded to NAHJ's inquiry, stating that the agency had no plans to conduct another study. Instead, it directed the group to the FCC's Web site to examine summaries of the commission's Form 323, which provides data on the race, gender and ethnicity of each broadcast license holder. Despite the NTIA's dire warning and findings, the FCC continued to move forward with its plan to relax ownership rules without dealing with the issue of minority ownership.

After NTIA's response to our letter, the nonprofit, nonpartisan group Free Press decided to conduct its own study on the state of minority ownership. Free Press fact-checked the accuracy of FCC data for all 1,300-plus full-power TV stations and the 10,000-plus radio stations in the country to determine the current state of minority ownership. The gathering process and the accuracy of the FCC data were found to be lacking.

Free Press' study on television released in September 2006 and its radio study released in June 2007 found that while people of color make up 35 percent of the U.S. population, they own just 3 percent of all local TV stations and 8 percent of all local radio stations. These studies also found that minority owners were less likely to own stations in concentrated media markets. In addition, they also found that women owned just 5 percent of all local TV stations and 6 percent of radio stations.

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Kevin Martin, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission

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These studies have played a critical role in educating the public about the crisis in minority ownership, while placing a spotlight on the FCC's neglect of the issue of minority ownership. This issue can no longer be ignored.

During the Federal Communications Commission's Sept. 20 hearing in Chicago, Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein called for the creation of an independent Minority Ownership Task Force to examine proposals to increase the number of minority broadcast owners. Since then, Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) and Rep. Hilda Solis (D-Calif.), as well as the Rev. Jesse Jackson, have urged the creation of such a task force.

NAHJ would like to add its support for the creation of this independent minority ownership task force. The FCC must first resolve the crisis in minority ownership before it can move forward with any plans to adopt new ownership rules that could further media consolidation and force minority ownership in decline.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Rafael Olmeda
NAHJ President