



NEWS

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COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS CALLS FOR RE-EXAMINATION OF FCC'S INDECENCY DEFINITION, ANALYSIS OF LINK BETWEEN MEDIA CONSOLIDATION AND "RACE TO THE BOTTOM"

FCC Commissioner Michael J. Copps today said that, "It's time for the Commission to change its definition of indecency. Too many indecency complaints from consumers and too many truly indecent broadcasts are falling through the cracks." Copps also called for "a review of the potential correlation between increasing indecency problems and increasing media consolidation."

Copps explained that, "of the nearly 500 indecency complaints received by the Enforcement Bureau in the last year, only a tiny number have resulted in any action. If our definition leads to that result, then our current definition of indecency just isn't getting the job done. Our definition must better protect our kids against indecent material."

Copps added: "That's not all. It's time for us to step up to the plate and tackle the wanton violence our kids are served up every day. Compelling arguments have been made that excessive violence is every bit as indecent, profane and obscene as anything else that's broadcast. I think those arguments are strong enough to compel our looking at them. This is about the public interest, responsible broadcasting, and providing programming that appeals to something other than the lowest common denominator that some advertiser can find to exploit. It's shameful. You can't tell me this is what the pioneers of the great broadcast industry had in mind when they brought radio and TV to us. I surely hope my colleagues will join me in addressing this problem."

Copps also pointed to the correlation between increasing media consolidation and increasing indecency on the airwaves. "Why is it that we seem to be in the midst of a 'race to the bottom' at the same time that the industry is in a race to consolidate? Has consolidation led to an increase in the amount of indecent programming? When programming decisions are made on Wall Street or Madison Avenue, rather than by local broadcasters on Main Street, does indecency grow more pervasive? We must answer these questions before the Commission votes on whether to eliminate our media concentration protections this spring," Copps concluded.