



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
David Fiske: (202) 418-0513

FCC Chairman Responds to Request for Delay on Media Ownership Proceeding

Washington, D.C.—Federal Communication Commission Chairman Michael K. Powell personally delivered his response today to Commissioners Jonathan S. Adelstein and Michael J. Copps, both of whom had requested a delay of the June 2nd vote on the broadcast ownership Biennial Review proceeding.

In a letter, Powell thanked Commissioners Adelstein and Copps for their efforts to involve the public in the debate, explained why he was unable to grant the request, and announced an extension of the sunshine period to allow public debate to continue closer to the date of the vote.

“I have given serious consideration to the concerns raised in your letter and have solicited the views of the other Commissioners,” Powell wrote. “For reasons explained below, I must respectfully decline to postpone the planned June 2nd consideration of the Broadcast Ownership Biennial Review.”

“There is precedent for granting such a request,” Powell continued, “but it is not customary to do so over the strong objections of a majority of Commissioners who are prepared to proceed, or where Congress has statutorily set the pace of our deliberations, as is the case here.”

“Media ownership rules are intended to protect and advance the cherished values of diversity, localism and competition,” Powell wrote. “These values and the public interest, however, are ill-served by letting stand a body of rules that are unenforceable. When the judiciary reverses our rules, especially ones intended to promote core First Amendment values, it is incumbent on us to repair the shortcomings as quickly as possible.”

The Commission will vote on the media ownership Biennial Review on June 2, 2003, as previously scheduled. In addition, the sunshine period will be extended to Friday, May 30, the last business day before the open meeting, so that Commissioners and their staffs can continue to engage the public as the Commissioners deliberate the item internally.