

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL J. COPPS
RENOMINATED TO BE A MEMBER,
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

Chairman Stevens, Co-Chairman Inouye, distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for granting us this hearing so soon after our nominations. On a more personal level, allow me to thank you for the many courtesies you have extended to me during my tenure at the FCC.

It's always good to come home to the Senate. Fifteen years working here imparted a deep and lasting loyalty in me to this institution and this Committee. Those years from 1970 to 1985, working with your friend and mine, Senator Fritz Hollings, instilled in me great pride in the honorable calling that is public service. During my four-plus years as a Commissioner, I have worked to build an ongoing and cooperative relationship with each of you, the Committee and your Congressional colleagues. I have sought to implement the laws Congress passed, with as thorough an understanding of Congressional intent as I can gather. I look forward, if confirmed for a second term, to continuing to build on this close relationship with you.

Serving as a FCC Commissioner—being on the front lines as the telecommunications revolution transforms our lives and remakes our world—has been an exciting, challenging and inspiring experience. The sobering part of being a Commissioner is that the office is a high public trust. A lot rides on how we perform, and we need always to remember that communications is the business of every American and every American is affected by what the Commission does. Every American has a vested interest in how the Commission performs. Everyone is a stakeholder, and I try to think about that every day.

I have tried during my time at the Commission to give meaning to the public interest by promoting the core values Congress gave us in the Communications Act—things like promoting the safety and security of the people through reliable communications, a challenge brought home to us by 9/11 and also by the ravages of nature's hurricanes this past summer; values such as preserving and advancing universal service so that every American can benefit from the liberating opportunities that new technologies and services provide; values like developing more competition to benefit consumers and to spur innovation; and values, in the media, supporting localism, diversity, competition and family-friendly programming—things this Committee has worked hard to preserve.

Mr. Chairman, my objective as an FCC Commissioner is to help bring the best, most accessible, and cost-effective communications system in the world to all of our people – whether they live in rural areas, on tribal lands or in our inner cities, whether they have limited incomes or disabilities, whether they are schoolchildren or rural health care providers. I believe that Americans progress together or we progress not at all. Each and every citizen of this great country needs to have access to the wonders of advanced communications and information if he or she is going to succeed in the 21st

century. Today, having that access is every bit as important—maybe more so—than having access to basic telephone services was in the century just past.

I know that many of the issues now before the Commission are difficult and complex. I don't believe that any of us at the Commission has a silver bullet solution to all the many challenges that confront us, and I find that a little humility as we wade into these discussions always helps. But I do believe that my colleagues and I are working collegially to reach agreements that benefit consumers, foster innovation and encourage investment in this fast-moving, paradigm-shifting environment.

I also believe that the FCC can serve as even more of a resource for Congress as you look at how the statute is accommodating new marketplace developments and what changes may be necessary. We are the expert agency on communications, staffed by incredibly competent public servants, and I hope you will look to us more and more—and even push us—to provide the data and analyses you need, and to produce more options for you, teeing up the pros and cons of different ideas to deal with the communications challenges confronting our country. I believe that an independent regulatory agency has an obligation to provide you with that kind of input.

I look forward, if confirmed, to working with Chairman Martin, the other Commissioners, and my fellow Commissioner-nominee Debi Tate, to implement the vision enunciated by Congress. I pledge to continue working tirelessly, inclusively, and with the best judgment I can garner to get this job done.

I put a high value on public service, and, most of the time, I enjoy it. But as you Senators know better than me, it can be demanding, especially as those demands fall on the members of one's own family, and that is where they most often fall. I am grateful to each member of my family for their support and patience and encouragement over quite a few years in public service. My lovely and wonderful wife Beth and I have been blessed with five great children—three of whom are here today. They are our pride and joy and life's sweetest reward.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my brief statement. Thank you for your attention and for your many kindnesses through the years.