

Remarks of FCC Chairman Kevin J. Martin
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As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Henry. And, thank you to Maria and to American Women in Radio and Television for this invitation to be with you today. I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to you about the important issue of diversity; more specifically, about the importance of allowing diverse voices to be heard in media marketplace.

Along with competition and localism, diversity is one of the three core goals that form the foundation of the Commission's media policies, including its media ownership rules. The media touches almost every aspect of our lives. We are dependent upon it for our news, our information and our entertainment. Indeed, the opportunity to express diverse viewpoints lies at the heart of our democracy. A robust marketplace of ideas is by necessity one that reflects diverse perspectives and viewpoints.

In the past, AWRT has been active on the Commission's EEO rules. The outreach requirements in the Commission's EEO rules will help ensure that women and minorities are informed of new opportunities. I supported adoption of these rules. The EEO rules require broadcasters to engage in more expansive recruitment efforts and, in so doing, facilitate the ability of all members of society to learn about opportunities in the media sector. By choosing candidates from a larger, more diverse pool, broadcasters are better able to find the most qualified candidates. A more talented workforce leads to improved programming, which ultimately benefits everyone. Moreover, as AWRT has noted, while the opportunity for all members of society to work in the broadcast industry is important in its own right, it can also serve as a stepping stone towards station ownership.

Which brings me to my next point. In order to ensure that the American people have the benefit of a competitive and diverse media marketplace, we need to create more opportunities for different, new and independent voices to be heard. When you create these types of new opportunities, you also create new job opportunities in the broadcast and media fields.

Part of the challenge in creating these new opportunities is the limited number of channels currently available on broadcast television and radio, and the high start-up cost of building your own station. For instance, the costs of constructing a full power FM station can generally range from \$50,000 to \$250,000. And, that does not even include the cost of leasing or purchasing the property on which to construct a radio tower or the cost of establishing and maintaining a main studio. Those costs alone can be millions of dollars. Constructing a television station requires even greater funding than that needed to build a radio station. As AWRT itself has noted, often times, access to capital can prove to be one of the greatest challenges to becoming a station owner.

The Commission has taken some important steps to provide more opportunity in radio with the advent of Low Power FM. The Commission's goal in creating the Low Power FM service was to create a class of radio stations designed to serve very localized communities or underrepresented groups within communities. Low Power FM provides a lower cost opportunity for more new voices to get into the local radio market. As compared to the cost to construct a full power FM station, an LPFM station can be constructed for as little as \$10,000.

Another idea to encourage new and different voices in the television industry is to allow broadcasters to lease some of their existing spectrum to small and independently owned business. Conversion to digital operations enables broadcasters to fit a single channel of analog programming into a smaller amount of spectrum. Often, there is additional spectrum left over that can be used to air other channels of programming. Small and independently owned businesses could take advantage of this capacity and use it to air their own programming. This new programming station would obtain all the accompanying rights and obligations of other broadcast stations, such as public interest obligations and carriage rights.

Small businesses that are often owned by women and minorities would be the primary beneficiaries of this initiative. This would help ensure that viewpoints and perspectives of these groups are represented on the air. It would also create new job opportunities in the broadcast industry. And when we met recently, Maria noted that as the number of women working in the broadcast industry has increased, so has coverage of women's issues.

There is already an example of this type of relationship successfully broadcasting another voice in a number of communities throughout the country. In January, Latino Alternative TV (LATV) and Post-Newsweek announced a deal that provides for carriage of LATV programming on the multicast channels of Post-Newsweek stations in Miami, Orlando, Houston, and San Antonio. LATV programming will be available in these markets this spring.

Thank you again for inviting me to be with you today.