



# NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.  
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 27, 2007

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## STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS ON DELETION OF MINORITY MEDIA OWNERSHIP ITEM FROM TODAY'S AGENDA MEETING

I'm pleased that we have avoided a premature vote on minority and female ownership. It's not that this subject doesn't need our urgent attention. It does. Just today, Free Press released a new study showing that during the past year the number of minority-owned full-power commercial television stations declined by 8.5%, and the number of African American-owned full-power commercial television stations decreased **by nearly 60%**. It is almost inconceivable that the shameful state of affairs could be getting worse, and yet here we are.

But while we need to act quickly, we must not act recklessly. Just a few months ago, we belatedly put out for comment dozens of proposals from our own Diversity Committee and others that had been gathering dust for years at the FCC. At the time, I expressed concern that the process was becoming eerily reminiscent of former Chairman Michael Powell's rush to judgment four years ago when he rammed through consolidation that would have, had it not been subsequently reversed, inflicted incalculable injury on America's media.

Nothing has happened in the past few months to alleviate my concerns. To the contrary, when the Media Bureau denied a request for a brief extension of time to file reply comments from both the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council **and** the NAB, and then we subsequently received a draft *Order* addressing these complex issues with only three working days to meet with interested parties, it started to feel more and more like—if you'll pardon the expression—a whitewash.

Thankfully, we now have time to get it right. I hope we will have the good sense to do that instead of picking an arbitrary date to complete big media's wishlist. We should start by getting an accurate count of minority and female ownership. We also should heed the call of Commissioner Adelstein and many others to convene an independent panel to review the proposals. Most importantly, given the destructive impact of media consolidation on opportunities for minorities and women to compete for a share of the people's spectrum, we must act on these issues **before** voting on any proposals permitting big media to get even bigger.