

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JONATHAN S. ADELSTEIN**

Re: Promoting Diversification of Ownership in the Broadcasting Services, MB Docket No. 09-33

I enthusiastically support today's *Report and Order*, which takes a major stride in assessing and promoting diversity in the broadcast industry.

This item is long overdue. For decades, women and people of color have been underrepresented in broadcast ownership. While the Commission had lauded the virtue of a diverse broadcast media landscape, until today we have not even counted how many women and minorities actually own broadcast outlets. Finally, our rhetoric on diversity is aligning with our actions. The *Report and Order* affirmatively shows that we truly are committed to achieving this longstanding goal.

Diversity in broadcast ownership is too crucial for the Commission not to get it right. If we are going to make progress, we must lay a solid foundation. The first step is obtaining a clear picture of where we presently stand. I am pleased that we are overhauling our current method of collecting data on minority and female broadcast ownership. We are implementing a complete, credible, and illuminative means of gathering racial and gender information. An improvement in the quality of information we receive will allow us to assess the impact of our rules and policies on minority and female-owned entities, as well as the opportunities that are available for these stations to serve the public. This type of accurate empirical evidence is the basis for making sound policy decisions, and is necessary for providing a Constitutional basis to make progressive improvements in diversity.

But today's *Report and Order* is only the beginning. There is considerable work left to do with dedicated leaders in the broadcasting industry to evaluate the information we receive. Only then can we determine the most effective means to help diverse communities have their voices heard over the public airwaves.

In the past, I have encouraged this Commission to create an independent, bipartisan panel to analyze the state of women and minority ownership, review all outstanding proposals, conduct a much-needed census of stations owned by women and people of color, and make priority recommendations to the Commission. I'm glad to see that my proposed census is starting to take shape.

Even as we make progress on this front, new challenges appear with each year. Since our last *Diversity Order* in 2007, we have heard widespread concerns that the Portable People Meter ratings system ("PPM"), created by Arbitron, has started to pose a threat to minority- and women-owned stations. The Commission recognizes the important role of advertising revenue in ensuring a diverse ownership of broadcast assets. The potentially inaccurate ratings of PPMs could damage minority- and women-owned stations. I am encouraged that the Commission will soon launch an inquiry I have sought

into this audience measurement system so that all the facts and its effect on diversity will be evaluated and brought into light. We have clear authority over all signals transmitted by broadcasters under section 303(j) of the Communications Act to ensure they are in the public interest. Because encoded broadcast signals are required for the PPM to operate and the measurements are used as currency throughout the broadcasting industry, we have legitimate questions about whether to allow unaccredited systems to be used over the public airwaves, impairing the Commission's important goals to promote diversity and fair competition under the Communications Act. And in light of the challenging economic times and the fact the Commission uses Arbitron's market definitions and rating data, we need to ensure PPM's accuracy and reliability. The Commission cannot be left in the dark.

Both this *Report and Order* and the forthcoming PPM inquiry demonstrate not only the Commission's commitment to diversity, but also its determination to bring all the facts to the table in every decision. I am, therefore, pleased to support this item and the work that lies ahead.