



NEWS

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**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS
ON THE FCC'S REPLY BRIEF TO THE THIRD CIRCUIT
ON MEDIA OWNERSHIP**

“It is difficult for me to believe that our new FCC, with its new majority, is in court today basically accepting the validity of the pro-consolidation decision of a previous Commission. We have had 18 months to reconsider the awful vote that loosened our newspaper-broadcast cross ownership rules, but the best we can do, judging from today’s brief, is to kick the media ownership can farther down the road. Months ago we asked the court to be patient with us while the agency deliberates where it wants to go on media policy. The court understandably ran out of patience. Eighteen months is time enough to stop implementation of a rule that can only wreak more harm on our already threatened and diminished media.

“No item on the Commission’s agenda is so important to the future of our democracy as the future of our media. Three decades of hyper-speculation have diminished media diversity, put investigative journalism on the endangered species list and significantly dumbed-down our fact-based civic dialogue. More often than not, the FCC aided and abetted the process, encouraging the evisceration of our media ownership limits and abandoning our most basic public interest responsibilities regarding radio and television. Local, diverse and competitive media attuned to the needs of the myriad communities that comprise America are not a luxury that it would be nice to have. They are a necessity without which our democracy cannot thrive.

“Millions of citizens across the land understand what has been lost—we know that from previous debates over the ownership rules. They are as impatient as I am for action to redress the costly policy mistakes that have inflicted such a heavy toll on our media.

“Rather than bemoan what has happened today, however, I intend to redouble my efforts to move this issue to the Commission’s front burner where it deserves to be. We should have changed our media policy by now. We *must* change it in the months just ahead.”