

Remarks by Commissioner Mignon L. Clyburn

Public Discussion of Literature Review of Critical Information Needs of the American Public and Market Entry Barriers

June 26, 2012

Good morning, everyone. First allow me express how encouraged I am by the interest in today's discussion, which addresses both the critical information needs of the American public as well as market entry barriers. At first glance, these issues may appear somewhat unrelated, but as will be affirmed during this morning's exchange, they are tightly entwined. I am grateful for the incredible work submitted by scholars under the direction of the University of Southern California's Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism, and would be remiss if I did not thank Chairman Genachowski for his support of this study.

Today marks an important step for the FCC, as we attempt to fulfill our statutory mandate to promote policies favoring a diversity of media voices, vigorous economic competition, technological advancement, and promotion of the public interest, convenience, and necessity, in addition to identifying and eliminating market entry barriers for small businesses. This study begins the charting of a course to a more effective delivery of necessary information to *all* citizens. It holds the promise of enabling them to live safer and healthier lives by highlighting any challenges and exploring a host of opportunities for full access to educational, employment, information and business opportunities in addition to empowering them in their civic involvement. This literature review brings together disparate studies in order to produce a holistic overview of the ownership-employment-content relationship as it relates to the impact of women and minority participation in ensuring that all groups have their critical information needs met.

This study reaffirms what I have long championed – that the FCC must devote more attention to meeting the critical information needs of all Americans by breaking down barriers and thus paving the way for new opportunities. The Commission must emphatically insist that we leave no American behind when it comes to meeting the information needs of those in varied and vibrant communities of our nation – be they native born, immigrant, disabled, non-English speaking, low-income, or other. Should another natural or man-made disaster occur, no one should be at risk of missing vital information, nor should they ever be denied a chance at meaningful and fulfilling employment, or enfranchisement. When we fail to insist that the critical information needs of all Americans are met, we send a message to those un-served or underserved communities, unintended or not, that they are not worth as much as those communities whose information needs are fully met. This further fuels alienation and isolation.

To reaffirm, today we will discuss whether there are correlations between the ownership of enterprises owned by women, minorities and underrepresented groups to the production and distribution of critical information needs. Diverse voices often bring with them diverse ideas on how to reach diverse communities, and the study highlights this, through its first recommendation that FCC should devote greater attention to the barrier of under-representation of some groups in media ownership and employment.

It follows that recommendation by admonishing the Commission to recognize that the costs of network exclusion are borne not only by the excluded, but by the society at large, and increases exponentially with the continued growth and expansion of information and communication networks in our society. My office has continuously fought hard to drive this point home in all of the work that the Commission does, and I am eminently pleased to see that the importance of our message has been recognized in this report.

Two final points: First, I wish to make a plea that this agency and my fellow Commissioners continue the often arduous but always worthwhile endeavor of collecting vital data like we have here before us today, and that we use this data to inform our relevant policymaking decisions with the ultimate goal of ensuring that the information marketplace is one that serves all our our citizens optimally. And two, I must thank all of you for making this day one of my best at the Commission.

You are driven, purposed-filled thought-leaders, who are invested in and committed to this worthwhile effort. Dean Wilson, or as one of my staffers calls him, "The Oracle", has a long, rich history on these issues and is the perfect captain for this ship. Mark Lloyd, you are incredible, and along with Tom Reed and many others here on whom I rely for guidance, please know how enriched we all are by your contributions to this dialogue and our mission and duty to serve. Thank you.