

Media Contact:

Janice Wise, (202) 418-8165
janice.wise@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

**FCC EASES REPORTING BURDEN FOR VOLUNTEER
BOARD MEMBERS OF NONCOMMERCIAL BROADCASTERS**
Action Responds to Pleas from Public Broadcasters

WASHINGTON, April 20, 2017 – The Federal Communications Commission today made optional a previously mandatory requirement that compelled the officers and board members of noncommercial educational (NCE) stations to report personal information. NCE broadcasters said that, if left unchanged, this requirement would deter volunteers from serving in these important leadership positions.

Due to revisions to the FCC’s broadcast ownership reporting forms, the Commission recently began requiring NCE stations to make “reasonable and good faith efforts” to use unique registration numbers for their officers and board members on subsequent ownership reports, similar to the reporting requirements for owners of commercial stations. To obtain a unique registration number, these individuals – in many cases volunteers – were required to submit personal information, such as the last four digits of their social security number, their date of birth, residential address, and full name, or risk being subject to Commission enforcement action.

In May 2016, a number of NCE broadcasters filed petitions, asking the agency to reconsider these January 2016 changes. They stated that requiring the submission of personal information to the Commission would hinder the efforts of their stations to recruit qualified volunteers to serve on their licensee boards and would pose other unique challenges for certain noncommercial entities.

Today’s action will allow NCE stations to more readily utilize “special use” registration numbers, which do not require the submission of personal information to the Commission, on their ownership forms. NCE stations will no longer be required to make “reasonable and good faith efforts” to obtain the information needed to use unique registration numbers for board members and officers—and individuals serving in these important leadership positions will no longer be required to provide such information under the threat of FCC enforcement action. However, the FCC will still require NCEs to submit information about the gender, race, and ethnicity of their governing officers and board members.

This approach properly balances the Commission’s need to improve its broadcast ownership data with the potential chilling effects that a mandatory reporting requirement could have on participation in NCE station governance.

Action by the Commission April 20, 2017 by Order on Reconsideration (FCC 17-42). Chairman Pai and Commissioner O’Rielly approving. Commissioner Clyburn dissenting. Chairman Pai, Commissioners Clyburn and O’Rielly issuing separate statements.

MB Docket No. 07-294; MD Docket No. 10-234

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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. Cir. 1974).