

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

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August 9, 2021

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Acting Chair
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel:

We write to you today regarding a simple step that the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) can take to give local radio stations — particularly minority-owned stations — the ability to better compete in today’s media marketplace.

Every type of media, from broadcast television to cable to over-the-top providers to even newspapers, has the ability to geo-target content — *except for radio*. This puts radio at a distinct disadvantage, in terms of attracting both audience and advertisers. Listeners want to hear content tailored to their location. Advertisers know their customers and want to be able to reach them specifically. The technology exists to put radio on par with cable and broadcast television, print, and digital. But one small FCC rule from the 1980s stands in the way.

The FCC recently adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“NPRM”) to change that rule, giving radio broadcasters *the option* of launching geo-targeted content. We understand that the FCC has more recently granted experimental licenses to test this technology in two markets, and that the testing is currently underway with reports due to the FCC later this year.

We see this technology as particularly meaningful for minority broadcasters. Minority broadcasters by and large tend to own single stations or small station groups. In this highly-concentrated industry, they are up against well-funded interests with large market share. Minority-owned stations tend to be in diverse areas, where geo-targeted content, such as second-language content, could be particularly meaningful. Offering geo-targeted content would benefit other businesses in the area. For example, small businesses may be motivated to buy localized advertisements, when before they wouldn’t have considered radio to be good value for their money. These distinct benefits for minority broadcasters and communities are why 21 civil rights and minority groups support the proposal.

The ability to geo-target content would give radio broadcasters a way to offer better service to their specific communities, a way to promote localism and advance the public interest. We know you share these goals and hope you will promote them. We ask that you keep our offices advised of the testing and how it will inform the rulemaking process.

Sincerely,



G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress