

**JOINT STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONERS MICHAEL J. COPPS AND JONATHAN S. ADELSTEIN**

Re: *Application by Qwest Communications International Inc. for Authorization to Provide In-Region, InterLATA Services in Arizona (WC Docket No. 03-194)*

Today's decision is one for the history books. By granting Qwest authority to provide in-region, long-distance service in Arizona, we complete a cycle of state-by-state review of local competition that was set in motion by Congress in the 1996 Act. We commend Qwest for its efforts and also thank the Arizona Corporation Commission and the Wireline Competition Bureau. Without the hard work of all three, we would not reach this milestone in the Section 271 process.

But this is in no way the end of the Section 271 process—at least it shouldn't be. The real challenge is only beginning. We must put in place a rigorous and sustained monitoring process to ensure continued compliance. Congress set up the parameters for this process in Section 271. If at any time the Commission determines that a Bell Operating Company has ceased to satisfy the market-opening conditions required for Section 271 approval, the statute compels us to order corrections, impose penalties, or suspend or revoke approval. Competition is not guaranteed forever by Section 271—it is, at best, only enabled.

We need to take our enforcement duty more seriously. We have taken a step in the right direction by establishing a formal Section 271 Compliance Review Program. Yet our practice has been little more than requiring Bell Operating Companies to provide the Commission with performance data for the first year following long-distance authorization. This strikes us as a lax way to go about ensuring continued compliance. A more credible process would include this kind of oversight beyond just the first year following approval. Instead, we have stuck our head in the sand, willfully blind to the possibility that problems may arise after the first year of long-distance entry. Competitors always are free to file complaints, but we believe the statute compels us to do more here at the Commission. Without effective monitoring, we may find that the old monopoly forces that led to the breakup of Ma Bell will just piece themselves back together again.

Through the Section 271 process, we have unleashed a new era of competition, choice and innovation for American consumers. For consumers to continue to reap these benefits, the Commission will need to fortify its enforcement process to ensure local markets remain fully and irreversibly open to competition. We look forward to working cooperatively with our colleagues and our counterparts in the States to ensure that this becomes a reality.