

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: Leased Commercial Access; Development of Competition and Diversity in Video Programming Distribution and Carriage (MB Docket No. 07-42)

This rulemaking is about independent programming and ensuring that independent programmers have a fair shot at carriage on cable and other multi-channel distribution platforms. In particular, it focuses two key provisions of Title VI: commercial leased access requirements that apply to cable operators under Section 612, and program carriage rules that apply to cable operators and other pay television services under Section 616.

We must meet these statutory directives, not only because it's our duty, but because these independent programmers provide the diversity of voices that is so central to the proper functioning of our media and, ultimately, to our democracy itself. If our rules aren't giving independent programmers the carriage opportunities to which they're entitled, we'd better fix them – and fast. For instance, we have received very few program carriage complaints over the years. Is that because independent programmers are not facing unfair or discriminatory practices, or is it because our processes fail to provide timely and adequate relief and thus discourage the filing of otherwise legitimate claims? I note, in this regard, that the Commission seeks comment on the application of arbitration procedures or internal time lines for the resolution of program carriage or leased access complaints.

I thank the Chairman and my colleagues for initiating this rulemaking and look forward to bringing it to resolution as quickly as possible.