

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN**

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

The item we adopt today significantly reforms the Commission's leased access rules. I believe it is important for the Commission to foster the development of independent channels, including those owned by minorities and women. By adopting an expedited complaint process and a more rationale method for determining leased access rates, we take steps to make it easier for independent programmers to reach local audiences.

Section 612 of the Communications Act requires the Commission to promote "competition in the delivery of diverse sources of video programming." Unfortunately, however, our existing leased access rules were simply not achieving their intended purpose. For example, the Commission's most recent cable price survey found that cable systems on average carry only .7 leased access channels. The record suggests that the leased access regime has been extremely underutilized because of artificially high rates. Our order, therefore, is designed to increase the use of leased access channels and thereby enhance the diversity of programming.

I believe that the actions we take today will go a long way to accomplishing the twin goals of competition and diversity articulated in section 612 of the Act. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to adopt other policies that are designed to ensure that independent voices are heard.

