

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN**

Re: *Broadcast Localism, Report on Broadcast Localism and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.*

Establishing and maintaining a system of local broadcasting that is responsive to the unique interests and needs of individual communities is an extremely important policy goal for the Commission. Indeed, a strong commitment to serving their local communities is at the heart of broadcasters' requirement to serve the public interest.

Moreover, along with competition and diversity, localism is one of the three goals underlying all of our media ownership rules. In the context of our media ownership review, I was asked by my colleagues and members of Congress to revive the localism proceeding initiated and stopped under the previous Chairman several years ago. I agreed doing so would be an important and responsible step for the Commission to take.

First, I completed the remaining two hearings the previous Chairman committed to holding back in 2003. The Commission devoted more than \$160,000 to hear from expert witnesses and members of the public on broadcasters' service to their local communities. We also spent approximately \$350,000 to gather data on localism much of which was used in the studies conducted on media ownership. In addition, the Commission paid Professor Simon Anderson of the University of Virginia to produce an academic paper on "Localism and Welfare", which was made available on our website last December.

Last month, the Commission took an important step in promoting localism when we adopted an order requiring television broadcasters to better inform their communities about how the programming they air serves them. Specifically, television stations will file a standardized form on a quarterly basis that details the type of programming that they air and the manner in which they do it. This form will describe a host of programming information including the local civic affairs, local electoral affairs, public service announcements (whether sponsored or aired for free) and independently produced programming. With a standardized form and public Internet access to it, the public and government officials will now be able to engage directly in a discussion about exactly what local commitments broadcasters are and/or should be fulfilling.

Today we take the next important step of adopting a Report summarizing the record in this proceeding and an NPRM that includes specific recommendations as to what broadcasters should be, and most frequently are, doing to serve the interests and needs of their local communities. The changes we propose are intended to promote localism by providing viewers and listeners greater access to locally responsive programming including, but not limited to, local news and other civic affairs programming. Most importantly, we tentatively conclude that *all* broadcasters must air a certain amount of local programming. I believe such a requirement is at the heart of what it means to be a local broadcaster.