

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *Empowering Parents and Protecting Children in an Evolving Media Landscape, MB Docket No. 09-194*

Today, the Commission initiates an important inquiry on ways to protect America's children in our rapidly evolving media ecosystem. I applaud the efforts of Chairman Genachowski to prioritize our assessment of these issues. In the Commission's recently released *CSVA Report*, we acknowledged the plethora of advanced blocking technology and other retail tools available to parents to prohibit or, at best, discourage their children's access to undesirable media content. The *Report* concluded, however, that no single tool exists across all media platforms. By this NOI, we hope to glean more granular data on the reasons why parental control technologies vary so widely across media platforms, particularly when so much broadcast content is migrating to the Internet and portable devices. It is also apparent from the record that parents are still seeking additional media literacy information and tools, perhaps even including additional governmental action or voluntary industry efforts, to support their own steps to protect their children. The NOI raises a range of issues and solicits data, including data from other countries, to aid the Commission in devising its next steps in this process.

This inquiry also will inform us about the level of educational or other beneficial content available for children today. Many broadcasters have found creative, intelligent ways of bringing informative programming, especially that which is produced locally, to their kid audiences. We applaud those initiatives and encourage other broadcasters and cable operators to follow suit.

The Commission's rules to implement the Children's Television Act (CTA) require television licensees to air at least three hours per week of programming specifically designed to serve the educational and informational needs of children. General compliance with CTA guidelines aside, we need a better sense of the quality of core programming being provided by TV broadcasters, especially with the multicast streams available from digital transmission. How are licensees using these additional broadcast streams in ways that further the informational and educational needs of the children in their local areas? How should these issues be evaluated in the context of license renewal? These are worthwhile questions and this NOI seeks answers. I note, however, that the Commission sought comment in 2007 on the status of children's TV programming and broadcasters' compliance with CTA.¹ The proceeding is pending. I am hopeful that the inquiry we begin today will result in a more timely follow-up to undertake any actions needed to improve the programming available for children in today's media marketplace. I note also that the Commission has pending two further proceedings on children's media issues that address interactive and embedded advertising in television and in cable programming.² The critical issues raised in those proceedings may be ripe for Commission action now, and need not await the filing of comments in this NOI. I urge prompt review of the record in those proceedings to determine what actions the Commission can take that will protect children from inappropriate – and opaque – advertising content.

¹ *Commission Seeks Comment on the Status of Children's Television Programming*, MM Docket No. 00-167, Public Notice, 22 FCC Rcd 7267 (MB 2007).

² *Children's Television Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 19 FCC Rcd 22943 (2004); *Sponsorship Identification Rules and Embedded Advertising*, Notice of Inquiry and Notice of Proposed Rule Making, 23 FCC Rcd 10682 (2008).