

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: *In the Matter of Sinclair Broadcast Group*, File No. EB-IHD-16-00021748.

The entire saga involving Sinclair Broadcast Group could have been avoided, and there are many lessons to be learned here. Thankfully, we have the chance to conclude this mess today and move forward.

First and foremost, my concerns over how the Sinclair process has played out are well-documented, so I will not belabor those points here, except to say that I fully intend to keep pressing for reforms to the administrative law judge (ALJ) and HDO processes. For all intents and purposes, the use of an HDO—or the mere threat thereof—combined with the snail-like pace of the ALJ serve as a de facto death sentence for any proposed transaction that meets this fate. No transaction, irrespective of its underlying merits, should be subjected to such a broken process.

Regarding the specifics of this item, I thank the Chairman and staff for working with my office to bring this matter to conclusion and avoid any further unnecessary liability for the company, now that both parties have agreed to settle this matter. To be clear, the text is precise that Sinclair acted in good faith in its interpretation of Commission rules and precedent and that there is no character qualification issue arising from the underlying applications. Agreeing to a record financial settlement and extensive compliance requirements—far from the slap on the wrist that critics bemoan—will allow Sinclair to focus on broadcasting and serving the many Americans who rely on its stations for up to date health and safety information and local news, especially during this time.

It has taken nearly two years to write the final chapter in this proceeding, and some have tried to prolong the saga even further. In addition to the inertia of the already-lengthy process, some D.C. pundits have tried to frame the Commission's approach towards Sinclair in terms of partisan politics. While I can only speak for myself, I find this accusation to be completely wrong and inappropriate. Our duty as regulators is to treat entities under our purview fairly and impartially, and in cases where our processes have broken down, we owe it to those subject to our jurisdiction to make the needed fixes. It's time to close the book on this matter and move on.