

**STATEMENT OF
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Review of the Commission's Broadcast and Cable Equal Employment Opportunity Rules and Policies*, MB Docket No. 98-204, Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

Today we restart the effort to collect data from broadcasters about the race and gender composition of their workforce. This data is a vitally important to assess the industry's workforce diversity. Moreover, its collection is required under the law.

For decades, and later pursuant to Section 334 of the Communications Act, the Federal Communications Commission amassed this data to support its Equal Employment Opportunity obligations and address workforce discrimination. This effort was the byproduct of a hard-fought history, informed by civil rights struggles, the work of the Kerner Commission, and the recognition that what we hear and see on the screen plays a special role in defining who we are as communities and as a Nation.

But during the last two decades the agency has done too little to honor this history. The FCC paused collection of this data in 2001, in response to a court decision raising due process concerns about how it might be used. Efforts to fix this stalled in 2004, even after the FCC made clear that the data collected would be used exclusively for the purpose of compiling industry employment trends and developing reports to Congress. After so much time, this pause turned into a standstill.

I know we can do better than this. In fact, this rulemaking was the very first Media Bureau initiative I shared with my colleagues after taking the reins as Acting Chairwoman. I am proud that the questions we ask here are the first full-fledged effort to address this issue in more than a decade and a half. I look forward to the record that develops and the day—hopefully soon—when we can address this outstanding element of our Equal Employment Opportunity policies. The consensus we reached here benefited immensely from the work of Commissioner Starks, who has consistently championed the effort to fix this issue. I appreciate also the work of Commissioner Carr, who offered careful edits and worked collaboratively to help get this done.

A thank you is also due to Senator Chris Van Hollen and Representative Yvette Clarke who have pressed the FCC to make progress on this matter. We do that today—but more work lies ahead.