

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Amendment of Section 74.1231(i) of the Commission's Rules on FM Broadcast Booster Stations, MB Docket No. 20-401; Modernization of Media Initiative, MB Docket No. 17-105; Amendment of Section 74.1231(i) of the Commission's Rules on FM Broadcast Booster Stations, RM-11854*

There's no shortage of ways to consume media in the Internet age. Cable, satellite, streaming, and shorts. Podcasts, audiobooks, socials, and, for a time, even audio chat. All of them compete for our attention alongside good old-fashioned radio and broadcast TV. And all of that competition has led to open questions about the direction of media, and the future and role that broadcasters will play. The answers are not crystal clear.

I believe that radio and TV stations are unique, and will continue to shine. They reach just about every home and most roadways in America. They provide a free, over-the-air option for millions of Americans who just can't afford another subscription or are aching from subscription fatigue. They serve as critical conduits for public safety messaging when disaster strikes. They remain among the most trusted sources of local content, including local news, in our communities. Safe, trusted, local, free, and ubiquitous. Those are sound and strong fundamentals.

Broadcasters, though, still need to build and innovate. They'll need to keep giving a voice to every community that they serve. That's why I led the charge to reinstate broadcast workforce data reporting. It's why I continue to fight for a fast and fair transition to NextGenTV. And it's why I support today's decision to allow FM radio stations to originate geotargeted content. Radio is the only media service that, until today, could not offer geo-targeted content. Talk about competing with one-hand tied behind your back.

Small and independent FM broadcasters, many of them minority-owned, have been the driving force behind this change. They've said they want to offer tailored content that speaks to specific communities within their listening audience, including weather and emergency alerts. They've told us that times are tough, and that geotargeting could help them generate new ad revenue. They've also expressed interest in airing geotargeted content to boost public safety and civic engagement. No fewer than [21 civil rights organizations](#) also urged us to make this change. They believe geotargeting has the power to diversify media ownership, while giving small businesses and community organizations more of an opportunity to get their message on the air.

This is about innovation. It's about time we gave these broadcasters—on a voluntary basis—the opportunity to try out their plans. What they have in mind no doubt presents a fresh way of thinking about FM. But the spirit of entrepreneurship runs deep in our communications history, and embracing the new has created pathways to opportunity for millions of Americans. The same could be true for radio.

I'd like to thank leaders in Congress, especially Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Steven Horsford, Congressman Bennie Thompson, and Congressman Hank Johnson, for their support. I'd also like to thank my colleague Commissioner Carr -- he and I have been working side-by-side to make this proposal a reality for a number of years. This bipartisan and unanimous result wouldn't have been possible without his true collaboration. I'd also like to thank Chairwoman Rosenworcel for working with us to circulate this item.

Finally, I'd like to thank our excellent staff in the Media Bureau -- and especially the Audio Division -- for their dedication, determination, and tremendous expertise. This item has my full support.