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Founding President  
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Chairman of the Board  
Clair R. Young

**sclc**

# Southern Christian Leadership Conference

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Martin Luther King, III  
President

E. Randel T. Osburn  
Executive Vice President

The Honorable William E. Kennard  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

January 21, 1999

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Re: Advanced Telecommunications Services  
Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act  
CC Docket No. 98-147

Dear Chairman Kennard:

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) has been a leading organization for nonviolent social change for over thirty years. Our mission today also encompasses "economic justice" to ensure that all of us share in the fruits of our economic system. African-Americans spend over 10 billion dollars annually for telecommunications services, yet we believe that the private sector needs to work more closely with minority communities to deploy advanced telecommunications services into our urban and rural communities. After all, if our children or our local schools and libraries do not have access to computers with high speed Internet capabilities, they will suffer a significant competitive disadvantage in today's global communications environment. America cannot afford for that to happen and creative steps and actions need to be taken now.

There is a "Digital Divide" between information haves and have nots in this country. Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was passed to advance widespread deployment of advanced telecommunications services in urban and rural areas across America, but this has just not happened. We strongly support any efforts that will help to bridge the "Digital Divide" and help ensure that the public will reap the benefits of Section 706, as was intended by Congress.

In summary, we must ensure that applications of new technologies such as high-speed Internet access are available to all, not just privileged few. We look forward to working with you on this and other vital issues.

Sincerely,

E. Randel T. Osburn  
Executive Vice President/Chief Operations Officer

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3