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Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of
Public Interest Obligations
Of TV Broadcast Licenses

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MM Docket No. 99-360

FCC 99-390

REPLY COMMENTS OF CITIZENS FOR INDEPENDENT PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Respectfully Submitted,

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April 24, 2000

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SUMMARY

CIPB is compelled to reply to comments made by APTS. CIPB contends that the FCC must clarify the public interest obligations of public broadcasters. In the WQED-Cornerstone case that is cited herein, the FCC did not hold the broadcasters to even the current standards of public interest obligations for analog licensees. Set and hold stations accountable to their public interest obligations.

In contrast to APTS, CIPB contends that public television must not be allowed to weaken the educational mission in ancillary and supplementary services. If the ancillary and supplementary services are held to a different standard, then the already creeping commercialism found in so-called noncommercial broadcasting will explode. Already corporate underwriting influences programming. With the chronic under-funding that our nation's public broadcasting service already faces, it would be tempting to turn ancillary and supplemental services into a Daddy Warbucks to supplement programming and the transition to digital technology.

There is no justification for giving all public TV stations increased federal funding and additional spectrum with no concrete and enforceable public interest requirements attached. Any additional spectrum would be better placed in trust with representatives of the community to determine which groups are willing and able to provide public broadcasting as the Carnegie Commission intended it.

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REPLY COMMENTS OF CITIZENS FOR INDEPENDENT PUBLIC BROADCASTING

On behalf of the Board of Directors, National Advisory Committee and its members, Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting (CIPB) respectfully submits Reply Comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission's ("Commission" or "FCC") Notice of Inquiry, In the Matter of Public Interest Obligations of TV Broadcast Licensees, MM Docket No. 99-360 (rel. Dec. 20, 1999) ("NOI").

CIPB is a national membership organization dedicated to putting the public back into public broadcasting so that we all can join in the debate about our nation's future. At the national level, CIPB promotes a Public Broadcasting Trust (PBT) that is independently funded and publicly accountable. The PBT would provide up to \$1 billion in funds to underwrite noncommercial innovative programs for both national and local audiences.

CIPB's proposal also includes measures to ensure that local boards are truly diverse, have a clear sense of mission and recruit and reward station managers for measurable public service. The grants would be used as incentives to ensure station governance and programming that is responsive to the entire community.

At the community level, CIPB supports chapter initiatives to democratize programming and governance on local public broadcasting stations. CIPB also takes a leadership role in coordinating citizen input into pending FCC and Congressional hearings and decisions on matters relevant to its mission. For example, CIPB has assisted in efforts to protect public and noncommercial

educational broadcasting licenses from sale and abuse. Toward these goals, CIPB offers a training manual, video, web site, and national clearinghouse for organizing.

We have attached materials describing our proposal, board of directors and national advisory committee.

CIPB will focus its replies on the Comment submitted by the Association of America's Public Television Stations (APTS). APTS argues that the FCC "not create at this time any additional public interest obligations on public television stations beyond those already required in the analog world." In addition, APTS contends: "public interest obligations should not apply to ancillary and supplementary services because by definition these services are not part of the licensee's free over-the-air broadcast service available to the general public." Lastly, APTS supports "the creation of an additional reserved channel devoted to educational uses in each community." However, APTS asks that its members be "sufficiently funded" and given "first opportunity to operate these channels." CIPB will take each of these arguments in order.

I. The FCC Must Clarify the Public Interest Obligations of Public Broadcasters. Too Many Public Television Stations Are Not Presently Operating in the Public Interest

Since APTS cites their claims regarding community responsiveness to the WQED-Cornerstone case, we consider it fair to report on other contentions in that same proceeding. In its petitions to oppose WQED's 1997 application to transfer its license for channel 16 (WQEX-TV) to Cornerstone TeleVision and WQED's 1999 application for license renewal, Pittsburgh community groups charged WQED with repeated violations of the Communications Act requirements to maintain an effective Community Advisory Board, give reasonable public notice of meetings, hold open meetings, provide access to the station's public file, and to file documents with the FCC.

Even though WQED management proposed to change the character of its service by selling its second station allegedly to meet its debt obligations, members of its board of directors provided no effective oversight of this public trust. For example, they were never advised, let alone consulted, regarding authorization by members of Congress to dereserve WQEX-TV without an FCC ruling if

WQED were willing to refund to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting all revenue from subsequent sale of the station in excess of that needed to pay off the debt.

In addition, members were never allowed to see copies of the Mellon Bank loan agreement, the Cornerstone transfer agreement, and the internal investigation into improper business practices. One board member-State Senator Allen Kukovich-filed a Declaration with the FCC concerning his frustration in getting these documents.

Meetings were never posted in publications of general circulation, as required by law. In 1998, WQED's Public Relations Director George Hazimanolis acknowledged that board meeting dates are posted, without agenda, only in the *Pittsburgh Magazine* with, perhaps three mentions on WQED-FM a week in advance of the meeting. He said committee meetings are never posted. In a March interview with *Current* editor Steve Behrens, WQED's Washington attorney, Lawrence Miller, stated that, while CPB has open-meeting requirements, the FCC doesn't enforce them. This position must be regarded with special concern because WQED's CEO, George Miles, has chaired the APTS board and currently serves on the PBS board.

In addition, it is common knowledge that community advisory boards are rarely anywhere permitted to fulfill their function of "assessing the needs of the community" and recommending programs to the station. Interviews by Jerold Starr with community leaders in Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and other cities revealed that their stations were no more open and accountable, their community advisory boards no more authorized to carry out their designated mission, their public no more involved than was the case in Pittsburgh. The President of Denver public station KBDI-TV, Willard Rowland, Jr., has written extensively on the failure of stations to take seriously the requirement of an informed and active community advisory board.

Certainly, WQED was consistently unresponsive to regulations concerning maintenance of its Community Advisory Board (CAB). WQED's CAB met only once in 1992, twice in 1993 and not at all in 1994. For the 1993 meeting only 13 of 23 members showed up. All but ten minutes of the hour-long meeting were taken up by staff presentations.

As quoted in the Pittsburgh *Tribune-Review* (November 6, 1994), WQED CAB member Reverend George Exoo said, "My sense of it was they were meeting a bureaucratic requirement...I don't think that committee had any weight. I don't think (QED officials) were taking public opinion very seriously." Another participant said, "I wrote a memo afterward with my thoughts, but I never heard anything back. I don't think they were really interested." In 1996, Dr. Ann Sutherland Harris advised the FCC in a signed Declaration, "I had no impact on any aspect of the station's programming as a CAB member."

Since 1995, the WQED CAB, despite numerous requests from members for a change of time and venue, has met only before the start of the business day and during the week at the station. In March 1996, the WQED CAB had a long-awaited meeting with station officials to consider numerous requests. They asked to look at program service catalogues from which the station chooses its schedule and were refused. They asked to look at an annotated list of WQED programs in development and were refused. They asked how they could represent a community group who wanted to produce a local show to supplement a nationally scheduled program on the same topic and were given no guidance.

As a consequence of such unresponsive management, CAB attendance suffered. WQED's own figures claim that of 25 members invited, 18 attended the first quarterly meeting. Subsequent general meetings through the two-year term of the first CAB drew an average of eleven members. Attendance after the above meeting was down to six.

II. Public Television Must Not Be Allowed to Weaken the Educational Mission in Ancillary and Supplementary Services

A. The Trend Toward Creeping Commercialism

These days, U.S. public broadcasting stations typically feature nightly and weekly programs about Wall Street and business news, but no regular programs that examine the economy from the perspective of workers, consumers or environmentalists. NPR and PBS news and public affairs programs duplicated the same reliance on establishment voices as the commercial networks.

Even the noncommercial basis of the service is under assault. There are more co-production deals with commercial partners looking for lucrative back-ends. There are e-commerce services and partnerships with retail outlets. Five-second underwriting acknowledgements have expanded into 30-second commercials, including enticements on children's programs for junk food and theme parks.

In 1997, PBS chief Ervin Duggan presided over lunches for advertising people in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. He pitched advertisers to join PBS in "doing well by doing good," adding that supporting a PBS program "sends the distinctive and unmistakable message: "We care about quality." WNET President Bill Baker said, "Welcome to the new PBS. Corporate messages on PBS get more creative every year. You can show products. You can use slogans." Also, celebrity spokespersons, mascots, theme music, and phone numbers and web addresses are now allowed. Andrew Pappalardo of Young and Rubicam seemed pleased to observe, "What we have here is the commercialization of PBS." His client, Patrick Stasolla of International Home Foods, saw that PBS is "more receptive to the use of a more commercial message," making it a "strong business decision" to have Chef Boyardee underwrite PBS children's shows.

B. Commercialism in programming

Public broadcasting justifies its prohibition on even partial public interest and labor group underwriting of programs on the grounds that it must avoid any perception that its programming has been unduly influenced by its funding. This principle is not applied to corporate underwriters. Here are a dozen examples of programs shown on PBS in which the corporate underwriter had a direct interest in the content, all of which have been cited in the press.

- A show on Air Force One was partly funded by Boeing, the plane's manufacturer.
- The film, *James Reston: The Man Millions Read* about the New York Times columnist, was funded by the New York Times and produced by Susan Dryfoos, daughter of the late Times publisher Orvil Dryfoos and director of the Times' Oral History Project.

- The 8-part PBS series, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power*, was largely underwritten by Paine-Webber at a cost of \$6 million. Paine-Webber's subsidiary, Paine-Webber/Geodyne resources, based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is engaged in oil exploration and production.
- A program about gems was funded by DeBeers and Tiffany's and included plugs for both companies.
- *Heinz: The Story of an American Family* was produced by former press secretaries for Senator John Heinz for WQED-TV Pittsburgh with funding from People for John Heinz. The show included WQED board chair, Elsie Hillman, a key figure in the senator's political career.
- *The Stuff of Dreams*, a three-hour series about the technology of materials, was underwritten by Dow Corning, a company which provides specialty materials, such as silicone, for various products.
- *Jews of Boston*, produced by WGBH-TV Boston, featured businessman Steven Grossman and was underwritten by his firm.
- *New England Clambake*, produced by WGBH-TV, was hosted by Roger Berkowitz whose firm contributed up to \$10,000 in food and staff time to the production.
- Northwest Airlines, which has Asian routes, backed the four-part *Doing Business in Asia*.
- *Living Against the Odds*, a special on risk assessment, was funded by petrochemical company Chevron. The program included the statement, "We have to stop pointing the finger at industry for every environmental hazard."
- *The Machine that Changed the World*, a 1992 documentary about the computer, was partially funded by a \$1.9 million grant from the Unisys computer company.

One of the most popular new shows on PBS is called *The Antiques Road Show*. Shot in a different location every week, it features experts appraising the value of stuff brought in by locals hoping to strike it rich. The expert provides details on the object's background and closes with an estimated value that is flashed on the screen. This show is sponsored by Chubb Insurance, a company that insures antiques.

C. Commercial uses of digital technology

The enhanced program capacity of digital broadcasting offers the technical means of providing community service television in addition to standard programming. Instead, PBS has sought to exploit this opportunity for profit. It has asked the FCC for permission for public TV stations to do whatever they want with the additional channels, from leasing to commercial broadcasters, home shopping networks or infomercial producers to offering a subscription fee channel of popular PBS programs. In the apparent hope of approval, WGBH, WNET and PBS paid for a feasibility study to develop a pay cable channel.

In 1999, PBS President Ervin Duggan boasted that PBS is "one of the most recognized brands in America." Addressing the problem of cable competition, PBS official Robert Ottenhoff proposed strengthening PBS "brand awareness," attracting "new partners" to generate "substantial new programming capital" so that the service can "earn significant new income from the use of these programs." This vision is quintessentially commercial.

D. The true cost of the digital transition

David Liroff, Vice President of Technology and Planning at WGBH Boston, has indicated that a limited low-power on-air capability transmitter can be purchased for as little as \$1 million-\$1.5 million. According to Liroff, a major producer like WGBH, seeking to replace all of its equipment at once, might spend as much as \$5 million-\$8 million. This cost is expected to drop considerably in the future.

Even today, the cost of digital equipment is comparable to the old analog equipment. Stations already are replacing worn out analog equipment with digital as needed. Liroff advised that, until all questions about standards and costs were resolved, WGBH planned to lease all the digital equipment it needed for the next 5-6 years.

In October 1997, public broadcasters, under the direction of Liroff, submitted a proposal to the federal government for \$771 million to fund 45 percent of the projected transition costs of \$1.7

billion (about \$5 million per station), to be spread over three years. Since 300 of 351 PBS stations do not produce programs, many considered this estimate excessive. Nevertheless, in 1999 the House Telecommunications Subcommittee approved almost all the request.

While it is true that all but \$29 million has thus far been held up, many authorities expect the balance to be released in time. In addition, PBS has announced a plan to raise \$1 billion from foundations, state governments and viewers. Many stations already are developing their own public financing plans. Some have gone to their state legislatures for funding---\$35 million in California, \$20 million in Florida, \$17 million in Georgia, \$12 million in Ohio, \$8 million in Pennsylvania, \$6 million in Utah, etc.

Public broadcasting has until 2006 to become fully digital and return the old analog spectrum to the government. Experts have advised that even this deadline could be extended if digital TV doesn't get widespread public acceptance. The enhanced resolution of digital is apparent only in sets with screens 42 inches or larger. Such sets now sell for \$7,000 or more and require separate remote controls for analog and digital. Set-top decoders for those with cable or satellite dish will allow only a "modified" digital signal and should cost \$300-600.

All of this, of course, leaves out the one-third of the population without cable or satellite dish or considerable discretionary spending money. This group consists largely of the poor, racial minorities and those in rural areas; precisely the people for whom public television is intended. Liroff's committee advises that "...even the most optimistic projections predict that it will be 10 years before DTV receivers can be found in 30 percent of households."

III. Public Television Stations Must Not Be Given First Opportunity To Use Reserved Channels

In documenting its public service mission, APTS cites a handful of programs it claims are illustrative. These programs are selected from the full schedules of 351 stations over the past several years. More systematic study of public broadcasting's coverage of public affairs programming for unserved and underserved audiences belies this claim.

Referring again to the well-publicized WQED-Cornerstone Pittsburgh license transfer, community groups appealed to the FCC over the loss of programming of interest to public interest organizations, labor and minorities. WQED countered that the FCC must rely on "market forces to achieve programming diversity in local markets," rather than try to "regulate program formats." The community groups, represented by the Georgetown University Law Center, responded: "In view of "the fundamental purpose of noncommercial educational stations to serve audiences that are underserved by commercial broadcasting...it would make no sense to rely on market forces to ensure that community programming needs are met..."

PBS Underwriting Guidelines permit unlimited support of programming from private corporations, but expressly forbid any funding from public interest groups or organized labor. This amounts to a defacto censorship of content and all but ensures programming that is bland and conservative.

Dr. Stanley Aronowitz at the City University of New York Graduate Center conducted a systematic content analysis of the program descriptions for the "PBS National Program Service prime time schedule" provided to affiliates for 1988 and 1989. The study compared coverage of "the elite," "celebrities, artists and intellectuals," "workers," and "other social groups." All "class neutral" programming was excluded from the analysis. The researchers found that for those two years only 27 hours of programs were offered that "addressed the lives and concerns of workers as workers," as opposed to 253 hours that focused on the upper classes. Programming about workers represented less than one half of one percent of all PBS programming hours. There was only a single one-hour program about a union/management conflict.

A separate study by FAIR, released just a month before, found that on PBS' *McNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*, only six percent of guests represented all labor, community and racial and ethnic groups combined. Dave Davis, Executive Director of *American Playhouse*, admitted that PBS and "the rest" of the media "have not done well in terms of programming about blue collar workers and unions," but, he claimed, "we don't get much good material." John Sweeney, then Service Employees International Union President, commented, "the CUNY study clearly demonstrates how little PBS cares for the working people whose tax dollars and contributions make up the bulk of its budget...This undemocratic PBS policy is due for a change."

In June 1991, the House Telecommunications and Finance Subcommittee and the Senate Subcommittee on Communications held hearings in connection with the reauthorization of PBS federal funding. House Commerce Committee Chairman John Dingell read a lengthy statement into the Public Telecommunications Act of 1991 expressing the Committee's belief that public broadcasting should "make greater efforts to meet their obligation to encourage diversity in programming, including programming which addresses the lives and concerns of American workers and their families in documentaries, dramas, and public affairs programs." The Report added, "While some programming aimed at working Americans may consist of general audience and children's programming, the Committee believes that there is also a need for programming of specific interest to the adult American worker."

The next three-year reauthorization for PBS funding was scheduled for 1994. On August 26, 1994, in anticipation of a September 12th oversight hearing of his Subcommittee, Chairman Markey wrote to CPB chief Richard Carlson requesting information on ten items, among them an "update...on progress" in offering more labor programming.

At the same time, Aronowitz sought the data from PBS archives that would permit a replication of the original CUNY study. Rep. Bernie Sanders requested the necessary program logs on their behalf. PBS chief Ervin Duggan declined to provide the requested data. Instead, he appended a list of programs he said satisfied the requirements of the Act. Duggan expressed concern that having to defend PBS's "editorial judgment" to congressmen like Sanders might lead to greater influence by congressmen who "don't share" Sanders' "viewpoints."

In his response to Sanders, Duggan claimed "over 14 hours of documentary format, in-depth programs aired on PBS" on job and labor topics. These programs were described briefly and covered a two-year period. Given more than 1,000 hours of prime time programming per year, Duggan's list accounted for much less than one percent of the total. Finally, Duggan claimed that PBS "also presented extensive in-depth reports and panel discussions concerning labor, employment and foreign workers issues on the 'MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour' on at least 12 different

broadcasts." With more than 250 *NewsHour* programs per year, each with many segments, he again was boasting about a tiny fraction of airtime.

More revealing is the way in which *The NewsHour* covers the topics in question. Left out of Duggan's response was any concern with whose perspectives are represented and whose stories are told. A study by Vassar College sociologist William Hoynes of all 130 editions of *The NewsHour* over a six-month period in 1989 is revealing. There were 35 segments on economic issues, with a total of 42 guests. Government officials made up 41 percent of the guests, corporate representatives 29 percent and labor representatives only 10 percent.

A 1989 study by sociologists William Hoynes and David Croteau of guests on *The NewsHour* found that whites (90 percent) and males (87 percent) dominated. Some 46 percent of sources consisted of current or former government officials. All public interest group representatives combined accounted for only 6 percent of the sources. The segments that focused on economic issues featured three times as many corporate representatives as labor representatives.

In 1991, MacNeil defended these choices like this: "The policy critics are not visible in our program because most of the time in our studio discussion...we are coming at the point when the debate has reached the question of policy and how that policy will be turned into action..." In short, the program focuses on elite decision-makers.

In December 1998, Hoynes replicated his earlier study. He looked at 75 programs, including 276 stories and 651 on-camera sources over a two-week period. Hoynes found that PBS public affairs coverage had become even more provincial and elitist. Nearly 75 percent of the story topics dealt with domestic and economic news. Depending on the topic, from 75 percent to 90 percent of the sources that appeared on camera were "elite voices," that is corporate representatives, government officials and professional journalists and academics; the same voices one hears on commercial television.

Citizen activists accounted for only 4.5 percent of all sources, down from 5.9 percent in 1992. Members of the general public comprised 5.7 percent of all sources, down from 12 percent in 1992. Only 21.5 percent of sources were women, down from 23.1 percent in 1992. Hoynes concludes,

"This insider orientation makes it hard to define what, outside of the one-hour length of the evening news, defines public television as innovative, independent or alternative."

IV. Independent Television Service (ITVS)

In 1987, members of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers presented testimony to Congress that independent producers faced an increasingly "closed system" in gaining access to PBS. At the same time, more stations were broadcasting commercial network reruns like *Lassie*, *Ozzie and Harriet*, and *Star Trek*.

In response, Congress established the Independent Television Service (ITVS) funded by a set aside from CPB and charged to "provide increased access to the public broadcasting system for independent producers and promote greater innovation and diversity...in the programming supported by the CPB and made available to the public." Particular emphasis was placed on "programs by and about minorities" and "programming addressing the lives and concerns of the American worker." The CPB's Multiracial Programming Fund became a statutory requirement.

While many programs since have been produced with ITVS support, PBS has felt no obligation to provide them to the viewing public. In fact, former PBS vice president of programming Kathy Quattrone said she regarded ITVS as just one of several competing suppliers from which she hoped she could "pull the best for the national schedule." In 1997, ITVS Director James Yee conceded, "The PBS schedule has not really changed in the last several years. There is very little room for original programming."

That public broadcasting would take credit for Henry Hampton's wonderful series on the civil rights movement, *Eyes on the Prize*, exposes the inflation that permeates their claims. Yes, the PBS national program service did offer the program to member stations, most of whom carried it. However, the CPB did little to make this project possible. Hampton labored for six years before he was able to put together forty-four underwriters to raise the \$2.5 million needed for the first six episodes.

Despite his success at PBS, in 1986 Bill Moyers complained, "The system leaves no room for independent journalists or serious inquiry into our society." And in 1995, as he was anticipating his retirement, *The NewsHour's* Robert MacNeil acknowledged, "We are not as provocative, innovative, creative or original as we should be...Trying to ingratiate ourselves with the public by diluting what we do plays into the hands of the people who say we're either not good enough or not necessary."

To make matters worse, PBS member stations feel free to censor any PBS national program service offering they judge to be too controversial. The Watergate hearings were rejected by fully one-third of PBS member stations. Marlon Riggs' film *Tongues Untied* was banned by more than two-thirds of PBS stations and *Tales of the City* was either banned or edited in several states.

The above underscores the point that public TV stations differ significantly in terms of their structure, operation, contribution to the public, openness and accountability. More than 300 stations do not contribute anything to the national program service. The average station produces only about 100 hours of local programming a year, an output that has declined steadily over the years and varies significantly by station.

Some stations are more open and accountable than others. Large market stations are in a position to generate considerable ancillary revenue while small market and state owned stations are not. To exempt all stations from any public service obligations attached to the additional digital spectrum granted based on the exemplary contributions of a few sends entirely the wrong message to the stations, the viewing public, taxpayers and Congress.

APTS asserts that it provides "free over-the-air broadcast service...to the general public." This claim stands as the premise for its request that no additional obligations be imposed on its enhanced digital transmission capacity. In fact, about 75 percent of public broadcasting's income is contributed directly or indirectly by taxpayers and individual contributors. It must be noted further that 75 percent of the revenue goes for station operations and only 20 percent for making national television programs. This must be kept firmly in mind in any consideration of what public broadcasting owes the public in service made possible by the new digital transmission technology.

Conclusion

In this context, there is no justification for giving all public TV stations increased federal funding and additional spectrum with no concrete and enforceable public interest requirements attached. In addition to the need for more diverse programming that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, there are a broad range of services that stations could offer to schools, prisons, public interest groups and others like literacy and foreign language training, workforce retaining and employment bulletin boards. The APTS request that such capacity be used for revenue generating services to support programming will only further promote the commercialism that already pervades the system and undermine any sense of mission driving programming and public services.

In fact, given its record thus far, we propose that any additional spectrum, like a 6 MHz channel for each viewing community, would be better placed in trust with representatives of the community to determine which entities, in fact, are willing and able to provide the service for which public broadcasting was intended.

CIPB opposes all of the APTS recommendations, not because we are critical of public broadcasting's mission but because we embrace it. Among other things, that mission is to be an alternative to corporate controlled commercial broadcasting, to serve as "a forum for controversy and debate, and "a voice for those not normally heard" so that we can "see American whole, in all its diversity." We consider public broadcasting's mission to be essential to a healthy democratic society.

We are sympathetic to the funding problem that clearly underlies the APTS presentation. And we propose to address it by constructive means. However, we feel that no good purpose is served by ignoring the serious compromises in mission that have characterized local public broadcasting stations in recent years and giving them permission to further neglect the enormous public service potential of these precious public resources in the future.

Again, all of the above comments must be understood as a defense of the concept and mission of public broadcasting as articulated in the Carnegie Commission Report that advised the legislation, the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, and even comments by President Lyndon B. Johnson as he signed the legislation into law.

Despite its wonderful promise, we must acknowledge that there is considerably less government support and protection for public television in the U.S. than anywhere in the modern world. In other countries the amount spent on public television far exceeds that in the U.S. In 1995, the governments of the United Kingdom spent almost \$39 per capita, Canada more than \$32, and Japan almost \$18. In the U.S., federal government support barely exceeded \$1.

With such modest funding for production and promotion, public television cannot compete with the \$40 billion a year commercial broadcasting industry. On an average evening, barely more than two percent of the American television audience is tuned in to public TV, as compared to commercial TV ratings of 13 percent or higher. In contrast, the BBC attracts 44 percent of the television audience, PSB Australia 16 percent, and CBC in Canada 14 percent.

Public broadcasting advocates in the United States have long known that the system is fundamentally flawed by its financial dependence. The transition to digital technology, on the other hand, presents a unique opportunity to finally achieve this goal. The recent report of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations for Digital TV strongly recommends that Congress should create a trust fund for public television and, if it does, the field should eliminate "enhanced underwriting," which "closely resembles full commercial advertising." While there was no strategy recommended for financing the fund, the report does recommend that the broadcast frequencies that public television now uses not be auctioned off for commercial purposes, but be retained for noncommercial educational programming.

Among the options for paying for the channels, the commission does mention spectrum auctions, the fees that the FCC is already empowered to collect from "ancillary and supplemental services" on digital channels, and new proposed fees on digital multicasting. A national poll by Celinda Lake Associates found four out of five Americans in favor of a five percent tax on commercial

broadcasters to fund public broadcasting programs. A mere two percent spectrum fee would produce a \$1 billion program fund, maybe four times the underwriting now available.

In closing, Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting, its board, national advisory committee and members strongly urge the FCC to reject the special interest claims of the Association of America's Public Television Stations. Its arguments only parallel that of commercial broadcasters who also claim that current public service should preempt any further public service obligations. Instead, public broadcasters should be serving as a model for the broadcasting community in setting high public interest standards while commercial broadcasters, who will receive more than \$70 billion in spectrum that belongs to the public, should give back to that public what it needs and deserves: an adequately funded, truly public, community responsive public broadcasting service.

Documents for above material will be sent separately.

Respectfully Submitted,

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NOLAN BOWIE is Senior Fellow and Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Bowie received his J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School in 1973 and did graduate study in Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. From 1986-98, he was an Associate Professor in the Department of Broadcasting, Telecommunications, and Mass Media of Temple University. Bowie has an extensive record of government and public service as an attorney and an expert on telecommunications policy. He recently authored a "white paper" on the possibilities of digital technology, published by the Annenberg Public Policy Center, University of Pennsylvania.

DANIEL DEL SOLAR is the proprietor of Solar Imaging, a media production company. Del Solar was graduated from Harvard University and did graduate study at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Illinois. He has long been a leader in innovative multicultural public broadcast programming. Del Solar served as General Manager WYBE-TV Philadelphia (1992-94) and General Manager KALW-FM San Francisco (1985-92). Before that del Solar was Director, Training and Development for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He served recently as Executive/Development Director at the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts and consultant to the Mexican Museum, both in San Francisco.

GEORGE GERBNER is Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunications, Temple University. From 1964-89, he was Professor and Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. Gerbner's pathbreaking research on children's programming and violence on television has been supported by many organizations, including the President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. He was executive editor of the quarterly *Journal of Communication* and chair of the editorial board of the *International Encyclopedia of Communication*. Gerbner is the founder of the Cultural Environment Movement. His many publications include *Invisible Crises: What Conglomerate Media Control Means for America and the World* (Westview, 1996).

JANINE JACKSON is Program Director for Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR), the national media watch group. She is host/producer of FAIR's nationally syndicated radio show, "CounterSpin" and host of CUNY-TV's monthly cable TV program, "Labor at the Crossroads." Jackson was graduated from Sarah Lawrence College and received an M.A. from the New School for Social Research. She co-edited the *FAIR Reader: An EXTRA! Review of Press and Politics in the 90's* (Westview). Jackson's articles have appeared in various publications, including *In These Times*, *St. Louis Journalism Review* and the UAW's *Solidarity*. In 1996, Jackson received the Metro (N.Y.) Labor Press Council's "Communicator of the Year" award.

NICHOLAS JOHNSON is Professor at the University of Iowa College of Law, specializing in mass media law. He also is chair of the National Citizens Communication Lobby. As a commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (1966-73), Johnson was present at the creation of U.S. public broadcasting. He has been involved with almost every aspect of the media as former Supreme Court law clerk to First Amendment defender Justice Hugo Black, FCC regulator, nationally syndicated columnist, candidate for the U.S. Senate and House, and public interest advocate. Johnson is the author of *How to Talk Back to Your Television Set*.

ALVIN H. PERLMUTTER is President of Alvin H. Perlmutter, Inc., a television production company, and Chair and CEO of Sunrise Media LLC, a television and educational news film archive. Perlmutter has originated more than 100 documentaries for PBS. He has been the recipient of numerous awards, including six Emmys for *The Great American Dream Machine*, *Adam Smith's Money World*, and *Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth With Bill Moyers*. Perlmutter also served as first executive producer of WNET's *Black Journal*, network television's first series directed to black audiences. Prior to his work in public broadcasting, Perlmutter served as Program Manager of WNBC-TV New York and as Vice President for NBC News.

JEROLD M. STARR (Executive Director) is Professor of Sociology, West Virginia University. Starr received his Ph.D. in Sociology from Brandeis University and served on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, 1969-76. He is Director of the Center for Social Studies Education in Pittsburgh, coordinator of a nationwide program to promote teaching of the Vietnam War in the public schools. A social activist for many years, Starr has been Co-Chair of the Save Pittsburgh Public Television campaign and founder and president of many local and national organizations, including the Association for Humanist Sociology. He has authored five books and numerous articles, including the forthcoming *Air Wars: The Fight to Reclaim Public Broadcasting* (Beacon Press, 2000).

BARBARA TRENT is a filmmaker, teacher, author and lecturer. Since 1983 she has been Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Empowerment Project, a media resource center serving filmmakers and producing documentary films and videos, which are used as tools for social change. From 1983-92, Trent produced six documentaries. *The Panama Deception* (1992), which she also directed, won several awards, including the Oscar for Best Documentary Feature. *Cover-up: Behind the Iran-Contra Affair* (1988) also won several awards, including Gold Apple/Best Documentary, National Educational Film and Video. Trent has taught at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and written on the themes of activism and film.



National Advisory Committee

ROBERT K. AVERY is Professor of Communication at the University of Utah where he works with KUED-TV and KUER-FM and the University of Utah's Student Broadcast Council. He received his Ph.D. from the Pennsylvania State University in 1971. A former public broadcasting executive, he is past Chairman of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters. Avery is founding editor of the scholarly journal, *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*. The most recent of his many writings on public broadcasting appear in the 1999 edition of *A History of Public Broadcasting*.

BEN BAGDIKIAN is former Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism, University of California at Berkeley. As a journalist, Bagdikian was honored with a Pulitzer Prize. As an author, he was recipient of the George Foster Peabody Award for criticism of broadcast commentary. His books include *The Information Machines* and *The Media Monopoly*. Bagdikian has served on the American Library Association Commission on Freedom and Equality of Access to Information. Early in his career, he was Assistant Managing Editor for National News and for The Washington Post.

JEFF COHEN is a regular commentator on Fox News Watch and columnist for *Brill's Content*. He is the founder and former Executive Director of Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), the national media watch group, based in New York. Cohen is a former co-writer of the nationally syndicated "Media Beat" column and the co-author of four books, including *Wizards of Media Oz: Behind the Curtain of Mainstream News* with Norman Solomon. He debates media issues on national TV and is a frequent campus lecturer.

JANNETTE DATES is Dean of the School of Communications at Howard University and former member of Howard's Department of Radio, Television and Film. She is Chair of the Black College Communications Association, member of the National Advisory Board of the George Foster Peabody Awards and member of the Board of Directors of the Broadcast Education Association. Earlier, Dates served as anchor and executive producer at Baltimore's WBAL-TV (NBC) and a public affairs panelist at Baltimore's WJZ-TV, (ABC). Her latest work is *Split Image: African Americans in the Mass Media*.

BARBARA EHRENREICH is an award-winning political essayist, columnist and social critic. Her commentaries have appeared in *Time* magazine, *The Nation*, *Harper's*, *Z Magazine* and *Mother Jones*. Ehrenreich is a Guggenheim Fellow and author of several books, including *Blood Rites: Origins & History of the Passions of War*, *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class*, *The Worst Years of Our Lives: Irreverent Notes from a Decade of Greed*, and a novel, *Kipper's Game*. She has appeared on "Good Morning America," "Today," "Charlie Rose" and "Donahue," among other television programs.

HENRY GELLER served as Communications Fellow with the Markle Foundation from 1989 through 1998. During this period, he also was a Senior Fellow at the Washington Annenberg Program of Northwestern University. From 1981-89, Geller was Director of the Washington Center for Public Policy Research and Professor at Duke University. From 1964-81, he was Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, Administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration in the U.S. Department of Commerce, Communications Fellow with the Aspen Institute, and General Counsel at the Federal Communications Commission.

DAVID EARL HONIG is a communications attorney with offices in both Washington, D.C. and Miami Beach. He is founder and Executive Director of the Minority Media and Telecommunications Counsel, an organization that coordinates FCC rulemaking and policy litigation on behalf of national minority organizations. Honig has litigated seventeen federal appeals in four courts, and participated in over 80 FCC rulemaking proceedings and hundreds of adjudicatory cases. He has published widely on communications issues and teaches civil rights litigation at the University of Miami School of Law.

WILLIAM HOYNES is Chair of the Sociology Department of Vassar College. His book, *Public Television for Sale: Media, the Market and the Public Sphere* was awarded the 1996 Goldsmith prize from the Shorenstein Center on Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University. Hoynes is co-author of *Media/Society: Industries, Images and Audiences* and *By Invitation Only: How the Media Limit Political Debate*. His most recent study is "The Cost of Survival: Political Discourse and the 'New PBS'."

BILL KOVACH is curator of the Nieman Foundation's journalism fellowships at Harvard University, the world's oldest mid-career education program for journalists. He has been a journalist and writer for 40 years, including 18 as a reporter and editor for the *New York Times*. From 1979-1986, Kovach was chief of the *Times* Washington Bureau. Previously, he was editor of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Over the years Kovach has supervised reporting projects that have won four Pulitzer Prizes. In 1999, he co-authored (with Tom Rosenstiel) *Warp Speed: America in the Age of Mixed Media*.

NANCY KRANICH is President of the American Library Association and Associate Dean of Libraries at New York University. She established the Coalition on Government Information and hosted the annual Freedom of Information Day honoring champions of the Public's Right to Know with the James Madison Award. Kranich also is on the Advisory Board of the National Security Archive in Washington. She has made more than 150 presentations and written more than 50 articles on media and democracy policy related issues.

JERRY M. LANDAY is Professor Emeritus in Journalism at the University of Illinois, where he still teaches "Issues in Television" to Chancellor's Honors students. Landay is a former news correspondent for ABC and CBS. He writes frequently on media-democracy issues for major national publications.

LEWIS H. LAPHAM is an award-winning essayist, as well as editor of Harper's Magazine (1976-1981 and 1983-present). In addition to his monthly essay for Harper's called "Notebook," Lapham was a syndicated newspaper columnist and speaker at the nation's leading universities, as well as NPR and CBC radio. Lapham also hosted and authored a six-part documentary series broadcast on public television and was the host and Executive Editor of "Bookmark," a weekly PBS series.

ED McCLARTY is Emeritus Dean of Telecommunications and Community Services, Modesto College and a former California State University Professor of Communication. He received his Ph.D. from Stanford University. For ten years, McClarty served as Chair and member of the California Public Broadcasting Commission. He also served nine years on the board of directors of KVIE-TV, Sacramento. McClarty is a former member of the Professional Standards and Ethics Commission, California Teachers Association.

HENRY MORGENTHAU III is an author and television producer. In twenty years at WGBH-TV Boston, he created and produced many documentaries and talk shows for the national network, including the *Eleanor Roosevelt: Prospects of Mankind* series and *The Negro and the American Promise* series. Morgenthau's shows at WGBH won Peabody, Emmy, UPI, EFLA, and Flaherty Film Festival awards. Prior to that he worked as a television producer for ABC, CBS and NBC and was acting program manager at WYNC. Morgenthau's family history, *Mostly Morgenthau's*, won the 1992 Jewish Book Council Prize for best autobiography/memoirs.

ALVIN F. POUSSAINT, MD is Director of the Media Center of the Judge Baker Children's Center in Boston. He also is a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Faculty Associate Dean for Student Affairs at Harvard Medical School. Poussaint received his MD from Cornell University. An expert on race relations, Poussaint has authored many publications, including *Raising Black Children* (1992). In 1997, he received a New England Emmy as co-executive producer of "Willoughby's Wonders." Poussaint has served as script consultant to NBC's "The Cosby Show" and "A Different World."

WILLARD D. ROWLAND, JR. is President and General Manager of Colorado Public Television (KBDI-TV) in Denver. He also is Professor and former Dean (1987-99) of the University of Colorado School of Journalism and Communication. Rowland received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois, where he was Associate Dean in the College of Communications. Previously, he served as Director of Research and Long-Range Planning for the Public Broadcasting Service. Rowland has published widely on a range of topics, including public service broadcasting and the public interest.

DANNY SCHECHTER is co-founder, vice-president and executive director of Globalvision, a New York-based international television and film company. Through Globalvision, Schechter created and produced the award-winning series, "South Africa Now" and served as co-executive producer of the weekly "Rights and Wrongs: Human Rights Television" with Charlayne Hunter-Gault. An Emmy award winner with ABC's "20/20," Schechter has directed seven independent films and written *The More You Watch, The Less You Know* (Seven Stories, 1997).

BILL SIEMERING is on the Open Society Institute staff working with the Network Media Program. Siemering has over 30 years of experience in public radio station management, program development, fundraising program evaluation. Siemering served as a founding member and the first director of programming of National Public Radio and hired the initial program staff for "All Things Considered." While V.P. at WHYY-FM, Philadelphia, he helped build "Fresh Air" into a national program. Siemering is the recipient of the Edward R. Murrow Award and a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. Since 1993, Siemering has assisted with the development of independent media in new democracies including South Africa, Mozambique, Slovakia, Macedonia, Moldova and Mongolia.

HEDRICK SMITH is a Pulitzer Prize-winning former *New York Times* Washington and Moscow Bureau Chief and author of four best-selling books, including *The Russians* and *The Power Game: How Washington Works*. For the past ten years, Smith also has been an independent producer. He has created, reported and hosted six PBS prime-time series. *Inside Gorbachev's USSR*, Smith's PBS series on perestroika, won the du-Pont Columbia gold baton and a George Polk Award in 1991. His inner city documentary, *Across the River*, won the Sydney Hillman award in 1995 for challenging media stereotypes.

JOHN WICKLEIN, a former public broadcasting producer and executive, coaches editing and reporting for *The Washington Post* and other papers. A former editor and reporter for *The New York Times*, he has been a contributor to *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, and *American Journalism Review*. Wicklein was the first news director at Channel 13 in New York and later served as program officer in charge of news and public affairs programs for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. In 1988, while at the Ohio State University, he founded the Working Group for Public Broadcasting, whose proposal served as the initial model for CIPB.

JACK WILLIS has been a producer and executive in commercial, cable and public television. He is currently Senior Fellow at the Open Society Institute where he is director of its media policy program. Most recently he was President and CEO of Twin Cities Public Television. Before that, Willis was Vice-President of programming and production for CBS Cable as well as Director of Programming for Metromedia Producer's Corp and public television's WNET/13 New York. His programs have won many awards, including seven Emmys. With his wife Mary, Willis has written several highly rated movies of the week.



PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE

The American people need and deserve space in our vast system of communications that is not controlled by the imperatives of power or profit. This would be space in which issues can be explored without censorship; space in which programs are not designed around product placements and commercial interruptions; space in which program ideas are not driven by selling audiences to advertisers; space in which minorities can be served without concern for ratings. This age of increasing concentration of media ownership into fewer and larger corporate giants makes the need for alternative perspectives and sources of information even more crucial.

This was the mission envisioned for public broadcasting when it was founded: to serve as "a forum for controversy and debate" and "a voice for groups in the community that may otherwise be unheard" so that we could "see America whole, in all its diversity." Over the years, public broadcasting has made many distinguished contributions to fulfilling this mission. Unfortunately, political and economic constraints have prevented a good service from becoming excellent.

Public broadcasting in other industrial democracies typically is supported by an independent source of revenue, enjoys considerably higher levels of funding, more money for program production, a broader schedule of programs, and bigger audiences. In contrast, public broadcasting in the U.S. must depend on a broad mix of Congressional and legislative appropriations, subscriber donations and corporate and foundation underwriting. This fragmented funding structure brings with it pervasive pressures to restrict grant support and air time to programs that will appeal to those who control the purse strings.

As a consequence, public broadcasting in America has learned to play it safe and cheap. The typical schedule features an abundance of "how to" and exotic nature programs. Theater consists typically of British imports and commercial reruns. There is a paucity of public affairs programming. PBS' one nightly news program duplicates the same reliance on government and corporate voices as network commercial programming. Local news and public affairs programs are few and far between.

There are nightly and weekly programs for those interested in big business and Wall Street investing, but no regular programs for those interested in issues in the workplace, consumer affairs, environmental protection, or human rights. Even Oscar-winning documentaries have been subject to this discrimination.

In recent years, the very non-commercial nature of the service has been under assault. There are more co-production deals with commercial partners looking for marketing spin-offs. There are e-commerce services and partnerships with retail outlets. Before she quit recently, PBS Program chief Kathy Quattrone complained, "Many program decisions are being based not on the program value they bring but what kind of a deal it can bring." Five-second underwriting acknowledgements have evolved into 30-second commercials, including pitches on children's programs for junk food and theme parks. Former PBS President Bruce Christensen has warned that, unless the funding problems can be solved, public broadcasting "will become a commercial medium in the next century."

THE PUBLIC BROADCASTING TRUST

The time has come to restructure the public broadcasting service as an independently funded public trust, comparable to the Red Cross, U.S. International Olympic Committee or Little League Baseball. This would take it off the federal dole, remove corporate advertising, stop the desperate search for money, and free public broadcasting to pursue its mission with editorial integrity.

To support innovative, diverse, noncommercial programming for both national and local audiences, an independent public broadcasting service would require at least \$1 billion in insulated annual program funds, in addition to current levels of operational support from state governments, individual subscribers, and foundations. Corporate donations would be briefly acknowledged and restricted to general system support.

Structure

A new Public Broadcasting Trust (PBT) would replace the President's patronage appointed Corporation for Public Broadcasting. It also would take over the satellite distribution systems now administered by PBS and NPR. In contrast to the CPB, the PBT Board of Trustees would be insulated from direct political pressure.

The PBT would have nine members with appointments made by representatives of the public broadcasting community (3), educational community (3) and President's Commission on the Arts and Humanities (2). The PBT Managing Director would be the ninth member, selected by the original eight board members. All members would serve staggered six-year terms. Participants in the nominating process would include representatives of public television and radio stations, independent producers, and associations for school administrators, teachers, academics, librarians, and school boards.

One half of the PBT's funds would go into commissioning, producing, and distributing programs as part of a national service to local stations. The national television service would be administered through a Television Program Department, itself divided into a Division of News and Public Affairs and a Division of Cultural and Educational Programming.

This programming, with funds for promotion, would be offered to local public stations free-of-charge. Thus, the Department would provide for a daily in-depth news program, documentaries, specials and coverage of special events as well as arts, entertainment, dramatic, and children's programming. Consistent with the unique mission of public broadcasting, there would be a premium on public affairs and cutting edge artistic presentations in prime time.

Within the Program Department, there would be a National Independent Program Laboratory, with a director and its own advisory board. This Laboratory would support independent productions for consideration by both local stations and the national service. The other half of the PBT's funds would be passed through to local television and radio stations to produce and acquire programs of interest to their specific communities. Since local program production is disproportionately costly, this fund will support productions that few stations now undertake for their community.

In addition, there would be a Radio Department to distribute funds to national programming services, like NPR and PRI, as well as independent producers. The Radio Department would commission new programs as well as support existing programs, all of which would be offered to local stations via satellite. The Radio Department also would make grants to local radio stations to produce national programs and program segments. These would be offered to local stations for their own choosing.

Funding

At present the U.S. enjoys a \$1 trillion budget surplus, in addition to a \$2 billion Social Security surplus. Just two percent of the \$1 trillion surplus (\$20 billion), invested at five percent interest, would provide \$1 billion a year to fund public broadcasting programming in perpetuity. With voter ignorance high and participation at an all-time low, what a wonderful investment in our democracy that would be. This makes it very clear that the main obstacle to this reform is not lack of funds, but lack of political vision.

Any proposal for funding a public broadcasting trust must respect the following criteria: Is it fair? Is it sufficient? Is it reliable? Our group, Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting, generally favors proposals that tax corporate profits rather than citizens and consumers for public broadcasting services.

A December 1998 poll by Lake, Snell, Perry and Associates found that only 19 percent of the public knew that broadcasters pay no fee to use the public's airwaves. Once advised of this fact, almost two-thirds of those with an opinion favored charging broadcasters for any additional airwaves, including airwaves for digital TV. This poll also found an overwhelming 79 percent of the American public favoring a proposal to require commercial broadcasters to pay 5 percent of their revenues into a fund to support public broadcasting programming.

Over the past several years, the FCC has conducted 14 spectrum auctions, raising more than \$23 billion for the federal treasury. The value of remaining unsold channels is estimated at between \$70 billion and \$100 billion. If placed in appropriate interest-bearing instruments, \$20 billion in spectrum auction proceeds (20 to 30 percent of the total) would provide \$1 billion in annual trust revenue.

Others have proposed a tax on the sale or transfer of commercial broadcast licenses. A 5 percent tax (to be paid by the seller) on the sales of television and radio licenses transferred in 1997 would have generated the billion dollars

needed. Such a method of financing public broadcasting would be fair and sufficient. The major problem with this mechanism is that since sales fluctuate in response to economic conditions, the flow of money would be less reliable than certain other sources.

Advertising in the United States is a \$200 billion a year business. In 1997 advertisers spent almost \$50 billion just on television and radio. Since broadcasters and corporations realize huge profits from using the public's airwaves, it would be fair to expect them to help support a public, non-commercial system. A 2 percent tax on broadcast advertising would generate \$1 billion for a public broadcasting trust fund. This amount likely would grow by at least 5 percent annually.

An annual spectrum fee on the revenue of commercial broadcasters may be the one device that is most fair, sufficient and reliable. In 1993, the Twentieth-Century Fund Task force estimated that a 2 percent spectrum fee would produce \$1 billion in annual revenue. Given the profit potential of digital broadcasting, such revenues could be expected to increase with time.

Any proposal for funding a Public Broadcasting Trust must respect the following criteria: Is it fair, is it sufficient, and is it reliable? Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting generally favors proposals that tax corporate profits rather than citizens and consumers for public broadcasting services. Possible sources of funds include a modest tax on spectrum auctions, the sale or transfer of commercial broadcast licenses and/or broadcast advertising or an annual spectrum fee. Each of these easily could produce the \$1 billion required to support the trust.

Local Community Accountability

The culture that governs the current system has been years in the making and, without structural intervention, will persist. New measures are needed to protect public service broadcasting from censorship by state and community-level politicians and to ensure that boards are truly diverse, have a clear sense of mission and recruit and reward station managers for measurable public service, rather than profit-making ventures.

The thrust of these new measures would be to empower local communities to actively oppose censorship and advocate for the full diversity of their programming needs. For starters, stations would be required to observe existing FCC rules and regulations. This would include posting board and committee meetings widely and making them open to the public. This also would include providing members of the public with easy access to complete public inspection files, including financial reports and correspondence with viewers and listeners. A properly functioning Public Broadcasting Trust would supervise random accountability audits. There would be procedures to identify non-compliance and to facilitate compliance on threat of loss of funding.

It is essential that boards be chosen in such a manner as to ensure diversity by race, gender, age, community, and field of service. A diverse board would make policy discussions broader and more inclusive, better survey the interests of public constituencies and provide easier access for station promotion efforts. Boards also must be educated and equipped to provide effective oversight of management on behalf of the community. A possible contribution to this goal might be to establish a system for subscriber election of board members.

Another requirement would be to empower community advisory boards to perform their designated function. They would have routine access to active program proposals, ongoing production schedules and alternative program sources. They also would be engaged in active outreach to the community to solicit evaluations and assess needs. All of this would be guided by a program policy developed by the BOD. And, of course, all of this would be subject to final approval by professional management and staff. Finally, the PBT would provide financial incentives for local program development.

Government Accountability

The proposed PBT would be accountable to both the legislative and executive branches of the federal government. The General Accounting Office would conduct a biennial financial audit to ensure fiscal responsibility. Every 10 years there would be an investigation, hearings and a report with suggested legislative changes prior to renewal of the mandate. Both a Presidential Commission and Congress would be involved in the process.

FORCES FOR CHANGE

Advocates for U.S. public broadcasting have long recognized that its financial dependence has compromised its editorial independence. Despite congressional sponsors, past proposals to establish a public broadcasting trust have been defeated by a combination of forces: a powerful National Association of Broadcasters, timid politicians not willing to confront commercial broadcasters or risk independent voices in the public arena, a divided public broadcasting community, and the narrow base of reform movements.

There are several forces for change these days which give hope that such now could be accomplished. In 1998, House Telecommunications Subcommittee leaders Billy Tauzin and Edward Markey designed a bill (later withdrawn) to create a permanent PBS trust fund, abolish the CPB and phase out commercial underwriting messages. The Gore Commission on the social responsibilities of digital broadcasters strongly recommends that Congress create a trust fund for public television and eliminate "enhanced underwriting" by corporations. A December 1998 poll by Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates found an overwhelming 79 percent of the American public favoring a proposal to require commercial broadcasters to pay 5 percent of their revenues into a fund to support public broadcasting programming.

CIPB is dedicated to creating a national coalition to build grassroots support for this proposal. At the same time, CIPB local chapters will work to democratize the governance and programming of their community's public broadcasting station(s). CIPB will act as a clearinghouse on the activities and accomplishments of these local chapters and on programs available for airing both nationally and locally.

CIPB is developing a training manual, instructional video, workshops, web page, and a national network to promote these goals. To learn more about CIPB, visit our web site at www.cipbonline.org. Write, fax or phone us at: 1029 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 638-6880; Fax (202) 638-6885.