



WASHINGTON
LINKAGE
GROUP

Government Relations & Strategic Consulting Firm

August 12, 2004

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

MB Docket No. 04-207

Dear Chairman Powell:

My name is Linda Paris and I am Vice President of the Washington Linkage Group, Inc. (WLG). For more than three years, WLG has worked with grass roots organizations, as well as African American elected officials to address the needs and concerns of their members and constituents.

As an African American business, we know how important it is for Americans from different backgrounds to see their demographic represented prominently in larger society. With that said, I support the efforts of the Urban Broadcasting Company to encourage greater diversity in television programming, but I do not believe that a la carte is the answer - in fact, as a cure, I believe it would be worse than any current ailment.

A wide-range of independent experts, from the National Urban League to LULAC have convinced me that government mandating the creation of an a la carte system would spell the end for many smaller, more specialized networks including networks aimed at specific ethnic audiences and networks offering foreign-language programming. Further, new networks would be dead on arrival without the guarantee of a subscriber base - and corresponding ad revenue - that the current system of bundling offers new networks.

We need more diversity on television today, but we have made strides. BET, TV One, Si TV, HTVN, ImaginAsian are just a few of the ethnic-oriented networks available today and as technology creates space for more distribution, I expect that number will grow with demand.

There is certainly a need for more ethnic programming, but a la carte is not our magic bullet.

Thank you,

Linda B. Paris
Vice President