

FCC Plans to Put Public and Political Files Online -- in Some Markets

WASHINGTON – Late Friday night before the holiday weekend, the Federal Communications Commission announced that it plans to vote on an order requiring television broadcasters to put their public inspection files online, including important political advertising records. The item was listed in the agency’s tentative agenda for its April 27th open meeting.

Free Press Senior Policy Counsel **Corie Wright** made the following statement:

“We are pleased the Commission is moving forward on this long-overdue effort to move these broadcast public files into the 21st century. Public information should actually be accessible to the public — not buried in broadcast stations’ filing cabinets. In 2012 there is no reason to continue keeping the public in the dark and the public files in the dark ages.

“Broadcasters will no doubt be lobbying hard to weaken this item before the Commission votes. We’re very concerned by reports that the FCC is considering excluding many stations and markets from these requirements. No matter the market size, voters in all states will face a barrage of ads this year about intense political contests and crucial public issues. All viewers should have access to information about who is trying to influence them over the public airwaves. The FCC shouldn’t compromise when it comes to transparency and information our communities need.

“We urge the FCC to stand strong and to ensure that this item requires all TV stations to provide more accessible information about how they are serving their communities and selling political advertising on the public airwaves.”