



**Minority Media &
Telecom Council**

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MMTC POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2014

MMTC's policy priorities bring a civil rights, minority entrepreneurship, and pro-competition sensibility to the print and electronic mass media, telecommunications, broadband, and Internet-based industries. Together these industries comprise 1/6 of the nation's economy.

MMTC'S GOALS

- **Entrepreneurship.** Expand opportunities for minority and women entrepreneurs who are trying to establish footholds in content creation, transmission and infrastructure; encourage pro-diversity procurement and supplier diversity initiatives.
- **Nondiscrimination.** Undertake to bring an end to discrimination on the basis of race, language, and gender in employment, advertising placement, and fundamental services to the public such as emergency communications.
- **Universal First Class Digital Citizenship.** Close the digital divide separating Americans by race, gender and economic status; promote universal access, adoption and informed use of broadband and Internet services.
- **Telecom and Internet Policy Reform.** Through our New Telecommunications and Internet Policy Taskforce, develop legislation, rulemakings, executive orders, public/private partnerships, data-driven research, and best practices that enable telecom and Internet policy to keep pace with rapidly evolving technology.

MMTC'S HIGHEST PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

I. Entrepreneurship

- Seek reinstatement of the Tax Certificate Policy and its extension to telecommunications.
- Seek preservation of the media ownership rules that protect minority ownership opportunities - *i.e.*, the TV duopoly rule and radio ownership caps; provide much more transparency and eliminate fraud in the operation of television SSA's.
- To help preserve investigative journalism, support some relaxation of the crossownership rules in large and some medium radio and television markets if, as applied, there is no adverse impact on minority ownership.

- Seek adoption of several of the over 60 long pending, race-neutral minority ownership proposals of the Diversity and Competition Supporters, especially:
 - Migration of AM radio onto the spectrum occupied by VHF Channels 5 and 6, thus tripling the value of AM stations (2/3 of minority owned radio stations are AM's).
 - Facilitating AM stations' ability to acquire FM translators (the "Tell City" issue), and MMTC's 2009 engineering regulatory reform proposals to reduce costs on AM operators.
 - NABOB's Media Incubator Proposal, pending since 1990, for waivers of the local radio ownership caps where the applicant has brought into being a new voice in the same or a larger market.
- Secure minority broadcasters' participation in the implementation of the Commission's new policy that facilitates foreign capital investment in broadcasting (interpreting Section 310(b)(4) of the Communications Act).
- Defeat legislation and regulations that would adversely impact minority broadcasters (e.g., some forms of performance royalty legislation, cable "a la carte" proposals, and most command-and-control broadcast localism rules).
- Seek adoption of a race-neutral eligible entity definition, such as the FCC Diversity Committee's Overcoming Disadvantages Preference, that is less dilute in its impact on minority ownership than the small business definition.
- Work closely with companies that want to expand the reach of their procurement and supplier diversity programs to include digital entrepreneurs and, particularly, online content creators.

II. Nondiscrimination

- Seek aggressive enforcement of FCC EEO regulations, coupled with transparency of FCC licensees' EEO data.
- Seek aggressive enforcement of the 2007 Advertising Nondiscrimination Rule.
- Support immigration reforms that will enhance Hispanic and Asian American families' full participation in the digital economy.
- Seek prompt adoption of the Spanish Broadcasters Association/United Church of Christ/MMTC 2005 "Katrina Petition" that would ensure that, in the wake of a hurricane or similar emergency, the public can receive reliable in-language information from at least one local radio station.

III. Universal First Class Digital Citizenship

- Seek incentives for the private investment needed to meet the President's goal of broadband access to 98% of the nation by 2015.

- To preserve the Minority Wireless Miracle, promote the rapid redeployment of underutilized spectrum to commercial wireless and, particularly, the prompt completion of DTV incentive auctions. To preserve diverse programming by broadcasters, support legislation to allow for deferral of capital gains taxation on auction proceeds for broadcasters who continue to offer their program streams on other platforms, such as other stations' DTV sub-channels, online, in print, or via satellite.
- Evaluate telecom merger transactions with a high public interest priority on MBE opportunities for asset ownership and for procurement and supplier diversity.
- Facilitate the placement of spectrum with those who are most likely to use it to promote innovation, including designated entities and facilities-based carriers.
- Evangelize in support of broadband and Internet applications to education (especially STEM), job creation, opportunities and training, IT healthcare, energy conservation through the smart grid, and civic engagement.
- Incentivize and support pro-active efforts by cable and broadband providers to offer affordable service and advance digital literacy among low-income consumers.
- Encourage the transition from the copper grid to IP in a way that preserves and extends affordable service to under-served and low-income populations.
- Ensure that privacy and security concerns do not inhibit universal broadband adoption.
- Vigorously oppose redlining by broadband providers on the basis of race or its close proxies such as wealth and geographic segregation.
- Oppose caps on Lifeline service for the poor; advocate for the expansion of the Rural Health Care Program, reining-in of the High Cost Fund, and expansion of the E-rate to support high speed broadband in the classroom and digital literacy training for teachers and students.
- Support usage-based cable and wireless billing where it is progressive in shifting costs away from the poor and underserved.
- Support reduced "prison payphone" interstate and intrastate rates, while also supporting eligibility of the small but critical low-income community serving commercial pay telephones for Lifeline support.
- Oppose regressive state and local wireless and digital goods tax assessments on broadband providers, and support tax and other incentives and intellectual property protections that would to facilitate minority entrepreneurs' participation in online commerce.
- To foster universal advanced tele-health services, support uniform state laws, such as those offered by the American Telemedicine Association and the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women (NOBEL Women), that would authorize insurance reimbursements for remote monitoring and home tele-health, and a modern federal licensure model for online medical services.

IV. Telecom and Internet Policy Reform

In January 2013, MMTC launched its New Telecommunications and Internet Policy Taskforce. Bipartisan, and comprised of leading experts with a wide range of views, the Taskforce seeks to entirely close the digital divide and thereby ensure universal first class digital citizenship for all of the American people. The Taskforce will play a key role in framing the new telecommunications legislation that Congress is likely to take up in 2015. The Taskforce has these objectives:

- Make the United States the world's leader in broadband infrastructure, adoption, informed use and consumer protection.
- Declare that market forces should be allowed to work without regulatory interference unless there is a genuine risk of market failure or the market has clearly failed; and in the event of an imminent or current market failure, particularly one that impacts the underserved, regulators should work promptly and aggressively to protect consumers and restore the market to health.
- Harmonize regulation across the ecosystem of converging and competing industries to ensure technological neutrality and consistent consumer protection.
- Achieve universal broadband access, adoption, affordability and proficiency by 2018.
- Enshrine in law specific and highly effective initiatives to ensure that all Americans, including minorities and women, will participate fully as owners and managers in the media, telecom and high tech industries.
- Ensure that minority consumer needs, minority demographics, and MBE participation are included in FCC and NTIA and related data collection:
 - Wireless Competition Report
 - Video Competition Report
 - Information Needs of Communities Report
 - Media Ownership Reports
 - Advertising Nondiscrimination Rule Effectiveness
 - IP Network Beta Tests and Trials
 - FCC Broadband Pilots
 - NTIA BTOP Updates
 - Gig U Updates
- Accomplish comprehensive FCC reform that would enable the Commission to resolve complex issues much more rapidly through a mediated multi-stakeholder process, along with other reforms that would afford parties due process, separate policymaking from adjudication, and secure the confidence of the appellate courts.

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