

Dear Chairman Wheeler and Commissioners Clyburn, Rosenworcel, Pai, and O'Reilly:

There is a lack of news and educational programming currently available focused specifically on African-Americans and Blacks living in America. As for the outlets or channels providing news or entertainment programming about African-Americans, the programming is of "scripted" reality shows focused on some Blacks engaged in habits mostly considered to be degrading to the community.

As far as news content, there is not any single national channel or network dedicated to having people of color telling the stories of the African-Americans. The news coverage offered on mainstream TV and cable is generally of crime or Blacks in poverty. The current coverage of the police-involved shooting death of the 18-year-old in Ferguson, Missouri is the latest example. Viewers—in America and around the world—are seeing Blacks in America being teargassed and shown as "out of control." Where is the balance? Where is the perspective? This is why the Black Television News Channel (BTNC) is so necessary for not only Blacks in America, but for America.

This BTNC partnership with The School of Journalism and Graphic Communication at Florida A&M University (FAMU)—Historically Black College and University (HBCU)—is crucial. They are seeking to correct the programming imbalance/void by launching the nation's first news and educational channel dedicated to the African-American Community.

I am supporting their endeavor.

BTNC desires to launch on a temporary market-entry period, on the channels that Congress, to promote media diversity, specifically set aside for "noncommercial educational programmers" on Direct Broadcast Satellite ("DBS") systems. This requires you to grant a temporary, three-year waiver of the Commission's ruling that noncommercial educational programming cannot include any advertisements.

I implore you to make this happen.

The waiver request's favorable condition include the following benefits:

- Producing 14 hours of news, informational and educational programming daily;
- Operating as a non-profit with revenue going directly back into supporting the development of news, informational, and educational programming, and infrastructure to support that programming;
- Creating at least 80 new media jobs in categories, i.e., anchors, writers, producers, production staff, engineers, broadcast sales, marketing, graphic designers, etc;
- Establishing at least 40 internship and mentorship programs related to news and media;
- Providing hands-on training for investigative reporting and local, community reporting;
- Including two minutes per hour of promotional air time dedicated to the promotion of HBCUs and National Association of Black Journalists training services, activities, and events; and
- Building out an HBCU media training center on the campus of FAMU.

The Commission has the legal authority to waive its rules. This petition lays out many of the good causes to do so. The ban on advertising is not statutory; instead, it reflects the Commission's own gloss on the statute, and the Commission may waive or modify its prior interpretations.

This relief will help correct the shameful level of minority media ownership that exists today and further the diversity and competition goals of the Communications Act as well as other public interest goals.