

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115
Majority (202) 225-3641
Minority (202) 225-2927

November 21, 2023

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Chairwoman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairwoman Rosenworcel,

I write to request information from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to understand the state of competition and barriers to entry of noncommercial educational (NCE) broadcast stations, specifically religious broadcast stations. As you know, I have expressed my concerns with any attempt to apply 1990s-era laws and regulations to virtual Multichannel Video Programming Distributors (vMVPDs). As Congress examines the state of the media marketplace and examines potential reforms to the laws that govern it, I request information regarding how NCE television stations are carried by programming distributors.

NCE stations are indispensable in promoting education, moral values, cultural and civic understanding, and are a unique voice in their communities. Their impact exemplifies the values of localism and diversity enshrined in the Communications Act of 1934 (Communications Act) by serving their communities beyond the screen. However, with the transition to unregulated streaming services, the voices of NCE stations are being left behind.

Section 13 of the Communications Act requires the FCC to “assess the state of competition in the communications marketplace, including competition to deliver voice, video, audio, and data services...” and to report Congress every two years.¹ Historically, this report has included minimal information regarding the availability of NCE broadcast stations, including radio and television religious broadcasting stations. Because religious broadcast stations play an important role in promoting diversity and localism – foundations of media policy in the United States² – as you prepare the next communications marketplace report, I urge you to consider more thoroughly the role of NCE broadcast stations in the communications marketplace.

¹ 47 U.S.C. 13(b)(1).

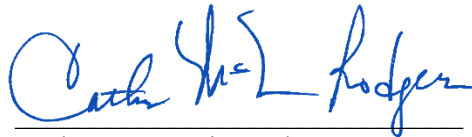
² 47 U.S.C. 257(b).

In the interim, I request that you provide my staff a briefing on information regarding the state of the marketplace regarding NCE stations no later than December 15, 2023. Specifically, please provide the following information:

1. The number of noncommercial educational television stations that are offered currently and each year for the last five years by Multichannel Video Programming Distributors (MVPDs).
2. The number of noncommercial educational television stations that are offered currently and each year for the last five years by vMVPDs.
3. The number of NCE stations that include religious broadcast programming currently and each year for the last five years.
4. Whether MVPDs or vMVPDs charge NCE television stations to be carried currently or have charged NCE television stations in any year over the last five years.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Kate O'Connor or Giulia Leganski with the Committee Staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cathy McMorris Rodgers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Cathy McMorris Rodgers

Chair

Energy and Commerce Committee