

February 21, 2014

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ABOUT THE DRAFT STUDY

Washington, D.C. – FCC Spokesperson Shannon Gilson issued the following statement today:

“By law, the FCC must report to Congress every three years on the barriers that may prevent entrepreneurs and small business from competing in the media marketplace, and pursue policies to eliminate those barriers. To fulfill that obligation in a meaningful way, the FCC's Office of Communications Business Opportunities consulted with academic researchers in 2012 and selected a contractor to design a study which would inform the FCC's report to Congress. Last summer, the proposed study was put out for public comment and one pilot to test the study design in a single marketplace – Columbia, S.C. – was planned.

“However, in the course of FCC review and public comment, concerns were raised that some of the questions may not have been appropriate. Chairman Wheeler agreed that survey questions in the study directed toward media outlet managers, news directors, and reporters overstepped the bounds of what is required. Last week, Chairman Wheeler informed lawmakers that that Commission has no intention of regulating political or other speech of journalists or broadcasters and would be modifying the draft study. Yesterday, the Chairman directed that those questions be removed entirely.

“To be clear, media owners and journalists will no longer be asked to participate in the Columbia, S.C. pilot study. The pilot will not be undertaken until a new study design is final. Any subsequent market studies conducted by the FCC, if determined necessary, will not seek participation from or include questions for media owners, news directors or reporters.

“Any suggestion that the FCC intends to regulate the speech of news media or plans to put monitors in America's newsrooms is false. The FCC looks forward to fulfilling its obligation to Congress to report on barriers to entry into the communications marketplace, and is currently revising its proposed study to achieve that goal.”

To read Chairman Wheeler's response to the CIN study: <http://fcc.us/1p2fSOS>

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