



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News media Information 202 / 418-0500
Fax-On-Demand 202 / 418-2830
TTY 202/418-2555
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
<ftp.fcc.gov>

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 6, 2012

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Dave Grimaldi (202) 418-2100

STATEMENT OF
FCC COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN
ON THE RELEASE OF
A REQUEST FOR QUOTATION FOR STUDY EXAMINING THE CRITICAL
INFORMATION NEEDS OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

“I am extremely pleased with today’s announcement, as it falls squarely within the Commission’s duty to comply with the directives of Section 257 and in reporting about the actions it has taken to meet those directives.

As directed by Congress, under Section 257 of the Communications Act of 1934, the Commission must identify and eliminate market entry barriers for small businesses and promote policies favoring “a diversity of media voices, vigorous economic competition, technological advancement, and promotion of the public interest, convenience and necessity.”

We are in need of more detail in describing how the Commission’s actions have fulfilled those purposes, and set forth, where appropriate, specific examples and data that support the conclusions found in past FCC reports.

We have been active in meeting our obligations under Section 257, through workshops that connect small businesses and entrepreneurs with financial experts who make daily decisions about capital resources. We have encouraged public-private partnerships to help small businesses adopt broadband, including increasing digital literacy and e-commerce skills as recommended in the National Broadband Plan. We have also produced an online guide to help inform small business owners about what informational assistance the Commission has available for new entrants.

But through the Public Notice that we release today, the FCC is further demonstrating its commitment to gather data and fund research and analysis to better understand how the Commission's policies promote the public interest. The Commission has long understood that diverse participation in the communications industry and access to diverse and antagonistic sources of information falls under that charge, and we are especially interested in whether the critical information needs of all Americans are being met. Making certain that our policies promote access to information about how to respond to emergencies and health care threats as well as other critical information must be an absolute priority of this Commission.

Further, does limited participation in the communications industry by women and minorities have an impact on whether all Americans have their critical information needs met? This Commission is committed to answering this question.

With today's Public Notice, this agency takes another important step towards examining the current critical information needs of all Americans. This type of inquiry should have been a fundamental aspect of the Federal Communications Commission's policy strategy all along. To properly meet its obligations under Section 257 and the other provisions of the Communications Act, which require the agency to adopt rules that serve the public interest, the Commission must, at a minimum, know if the current structure of the communications industry is adequately providing Americans with the information they need to secure their health and welfare. If the infrastructure is not adequately informing communities about an imminent natural disaster, a terror threat, a widespread health threat, or another public hazard, it is not adequately serving the public interest. The Commission must also try to identify any barriers there are to a community's receipt of critical information and possible ways to eliminate those barriers. I commend Chairman Genachowski for his support of these studies. I hope this Public Notice will attract the best research possible on this important issue.

- FCC -