

THE WHITE HOUSE  
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1997

CONTACT: 202-456-7035

**STATEMENT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
ON PUBLIC INTEREST OBLIGATIONS IN A DIGITAL AGE**

“The Telecommunications Act of 1996 envisioned the allocation of licenses for digital television. President Clinton and I have consistently stated that, as trustees of the public airwaves, broadcasters have an obligation to provide programming that serves the public interest.

Digital technology will greatly enhance the opportunities available to broadcasters to utilize multiple channels or programs. The public interest obligations should be commensurate with these new opportunities.

We also believe that clear public interest rules serve the interests of both broadcasters and viewers. For that reason, the President will convene a special advisory group to study and recommend to him within one year what the nature of the public interest obligations of digital broadcasters should be. During this time we will ask the FCC to keep the public interest question open and to proceed with the digital license allocation expeditiously.”

##

# Public Interest Obligations for Digital TV

Commerce Department Auditorium

9:30 am - 10:15 am, Wednesday October 22, 1997

Meeting requested by Don Gips/ Jim Kohlenberger

Briefing prepared by Jim Kohlenberger

## EVENT

You are kicking off the first meeting of the 23 member Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters -- also known as the Gore Commission. Just as the transition from analog to digital has had profound changes for every other lane on the Information Superhighway, so too will this change from analog to digital television bring untold new opportunities. Today you are laying out your vision for public interest obligations in this new digital environment. The membership on the committee is being announced today. The audience consists of members of the public who responded to a Federal Register notice. Open press.

## LOGISTICS (As of this writing, subject to change)

- Offstage announcement of you and Secretary Daley.
- You greet the members of your advisory committee on the way to stage.
- Secretary Daley makes opening remarks and introduces you.
- You will make your remarks. Three points in your speech are highlighted. First if you wish, when you refer to television of the past you can gesture to a '40s television on stage. Second, when you describe Digital Television, a HDTV screen will show a Symphony playing -- demonstrating the picture quality and sound that HDTV can bring. Third, at another point queued to your remarks, a video wall behind you will show three clips of what digital television can mean -- more entertainment, better educational programming and free TV time as demonstrated by clips from *Singing in the Rain*, *Sesame Street*, and the Kennedy/Nixon debate respectively.
- After your remarks, you will work a rope line and depart.

## YOUR ROLE/CONTRIBUTION

- This is an opportunity for you to inspire this commission to fulfill the administrations public interest agenda. You will lay out to the commission your and the President's vision for real public interest obligations including free time and children's television in the digital world.

## PROGRAM NOTES

- **Props on stage with you.** There are three props on stage with you. First, there is a 1946 Videodyne antique television -- one of the earliest postwar televisions in mass production. When this television first came into homes, we didn't understand the profound effect television would have on us nor what public interest obligations broadcasters would have. Second, a high definition television (HDTV) will show a North Carolina symphony playing in a park demonstrating dramatic picture quality and excellent sound. Third, a video wall will display several clips tied to your remarks. The three clips represent the changes that digital television will bring -- more entertainment, better educational programming and free TV time as demonstrated by clips from *Singing in the Rain*, *Sesame Street*, and the Kennedy/Nixon debate respectively. Both *Sesame Street*, and the Kennedy Nixon debate are examples of how public interest obligations for DTV can change lives. *Sesame Street* changed the course of children's lives, the Kennedy/Nixon Debate changed the course of a country.
- **The Advisory Committee.** You first proposed this advisory committee on the one year anniversary of the signing of the telecommunications Act. The Committee will study and recommend what public interest responsibilities should accompany the broadcasters' receipt of digital television licenses. The committee consists of 21 members and plus the two co-chairs -- Leslie Moonves, President of CBS Entertainment, and Dr. Norman Ornstein, Resident Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. The President created the committee on March 11th when he called for free TV time for political candidates and he announced the two-co-chairs of this committee in his Saturday Radio address June 28th. The committee must report back to YOU on or before June 1, 1998, on the public interest obligations digital television broadcasters should assume. Bios for the members are attached.
- **What is Digital Television?** Digital Television allows delivery of brilliant, high definition, multiple digital quality programs, and ancillary and supplementary services such as data transfer. It promises advanced services and efficient spectrum management. Digital technology allows for broadcast of high definition television (HDTV) as well as broadcast of multiple streams of standard television (SDTV). Many stations indicate they are interested in broadcasting six television programs instead of one HDTV program. HDTV offers several times better resolution of current analog signals approaching the quality of 35 millimeter film and has sound quality approaching that of a compact disc. The FCC is planning for a transition from the current analog television broadcast system to DTV over the next several years. During the transition, broadcasters will transmit both the existing analog television and DTV signals. In this way, consumers can continue to receive television programming on their existing receivers until they purchase new digital televisions or converters. TV stations in the top ten markets will build the facilities to provide a digital signal by November 1, 1999, while all stations

are required to provide a digital signal by 2003. Broadcasters will return their analog spectrum in 2006 for auction for other purposes.

• **What are public interest obligations?** The Telecom Act of 1996 authorizes the FCC to issue licenses for digital television under the condition that broadcasters remain subject to public interest obligations as deemed appropriate by the FCC. The public interest obligations for the analog have changed over the years. Some current obligations include:

- 1) 3 hours of educational and instructional programming per week
- 2) Television ratings came with the Telecom Act (the FCC is currently reviewing the new ratings system)
- 3) Broadcasters are prohibited from transmitting any obscene, indecent, or profane language over the airwaves.
- 4) Television advertising restrictions including requirements to identify an ad sponsor, a prohibition on tobacco advertising, and limits on advertising during children's programming.
- 5) Access to Broadcast Facilities by Candidates for Elected Political Office. Broadcasters must assure equal access, lowest unit charge and comparable use rates.
- 6) The Personal Attack Rule provides an opportunity for response to attacks on the honesty, character, or integrity of an identifiable person or group made during the presentation of views on controversial issues of public importance.
- 7) The "Fair Break" Doctrine requires that a broadcaster give a "fair break" to groups which do not share broadcaster's views.
- 8) Video Programming Accessibility: Closed Captioning & Video Description

• **Free TV.** As the President said in his radio address when announcing the two co-chairs for this commission, *"Spending in congressional campaigns has risen sixfold in the last two decades. That's more than three times the rate of inflation. Now both political parties are locked into an ever-escalating arms race, as they compete to raise more and more money. There's simply too much money required for campaigns, it takes too much time to raise, and it raises too many questions."* In 1972, candidates spent \$25 million for political ads; in 1996, \$400 million. Free TV time was dropped from McCain Feingold to get a bill.

• **Campaign Finance update.** Congress has to-date failed to pass McCain-Feingold. The current bill does not include any free TV provision; this was dropped during negotiations. Although the bill is currently stalled, it remains the subject of much debate: most recently, Daschle apparently said that he will hold up Fast Track for McCain-Feingold. Daschle and Lott both met with the President today. It is unclear at this time what the outcome of that meeting was.

- **Your 1988 Free TV bill.** You introduced a bill on October 21, 1988, to require, as a condition of receiving a broadcast license to use the public's airwaves, that every week for 2 months immediately preceding the quadrennial election for President, each licensee set aside time each week for use by the nominees in chunks of no less than one-half hour at a time. The time would be in Prime Time on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. In the next to the last month preceding the election, each week there would be a half hour allocated to each of the major party nominees. In the final month, it would be an hour per week. And in the final week, an hour and a half to each candidate.

#### ATTACHMENTS

- Committee Members
- Remarks

## Commission Members

### Co-Chairs

**Leslie Moonves, President, CBS Television:** As President of CBS Television, Mr. Moonves is responsible for the development and production of all entertainment programming and for building new programming platforms for future domestic and international development. Prior to joining CBS in 1995, Mr. Moonves served as President of Warner Bros. Television after its 1993 merger with Lorimar Television.

**Norman J. Ornstein, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute:** As a Resident Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Dr. Ornstein has written books on such issues as the budget, health policy, and the US Senate. He serves as an election analyst for CBS News, regularly writes for USA Today as a member of its Board of Contributors, and authors a column for Roll Call.

### Other Members

**Charles Benton.** Mr. Charles Benton is currently Chairman and CEO of Public Media Incorporated, which is a distributor and publisher of film and video programs. He also serves as Chairman and CEO of the Benton Foundation, an organization whose mandate is to connect Americans with the emerging digital communications environment. Mr. Benton has extensive experience in the business, non-profit, and public service sectors. Mr. Benton holds a B.A. from Yale University and has completed graduate studies at Northwestern University and the National College of Education.

**Frank Blythe.** Mr. Frank Blythe of Lincoln, Nebraska, is the Executive Director of Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, where he manages the production and distribution of American Indian films, videos, and radio programming to the Public Broadcasting System and the American Indian Radio On Satellite Network. Previous to his work with NAPT he spent 15 years working in commercial broadcasting in Phoenix, Lincoln and Omaha. Mr. Blythe holds a B.A. from Arizona State University and has done graduate work at Arizona State University and Harvard University. Mr. Blythe is an enrolled member of the Eastern Cherokee Tribe and the Sisseton Dakota Sioux Nation heritage.

**Peggy Charren.** Ms. Peggy Charren of Cambridge, Massachusetts, is the founder of Action for Children's Television, a national child advocacy organization that encourages responsible broadcasting practices. She is currently a visiting scholar at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. Ms. Charren holds academic honors from Radcliffe College and Connecticut College and honorary degrees from six colleges and universities. One of Peggy's relatives wrote Mr. Smith goes to Washington. She was delighted that you used it.

**Harold C. Crump.** Mr. Harold C. Crump of Tennessee, is the Vice President of Corporate Affairs for Hubbard Broadcasting, Inc. Previous to joining Hubbard Broadcasting, Inc.

Mr. Crump was President and CEO of Crump Communications, Inc., and owner and operator of WCSC-TV in South Carolina. Prior to that he was President of H&C Broadcast Group of Houston, Texas. Mr. Crump graduated the University of Mississippi in 1953 with a B.B.A. in Advertising.

**Frank Cruz.** Mr. Frank Cruz of Laguna Niguel, California, is a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He is also a founder of Telemundo, the nation's second largest Spanish language network. Mr. Cruz is currently the President of Cruz & Associates Inc., a financial consultant group. Mr. Cruz holds an A.A. from East Los Angeles College and a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Southern California.

**Robert Decherd.** Mr. Robert Decherd of Dallas, Texas, is Chairman of the Board, President, and CEO of A.H. Belo Corporation, which is a leading television broadcasting and newspaper publishing company. A.H. Belo Corporation owns 16 network-affiliated television stations, six daily newspapers, three local or regional cable news channels and a production company. Mr. Decherd is a graduate of Harvard University.

**Barry Diller** Mr. Barry Diller of New York City, New York and Los Angeles, California, is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of HSN, Inc., the parent company of Home Shopping Network, Silver King Broadcasting, SF Broadcasting, the Internet Shopping Network, and Vela Research. Mr. Diller has previously served as Chairman and CEO of Fox, Inc., and Paramount Pictures Corporations. Prior to Paramount Pictures, Mr. Diller was Vice President of Prime Time Television for ABC Entertainment and pioneered the made-for-television "Movie of the Week" known as mini-series.

**William Duhamel** Dr. William Duhamel of Rapid City, South Dakota, is the President of Duhamel Broadcasting Enterprises, a family-held South Dakota corporation. Dr. Duhamel was one of the co-founders of South Dakota Cable Television, Inc. which brought the first cable television service to western South Dakota in 1966. Dr. Duhamel holds a B.A. and M.A. from St. Louis University and a Ph.D. from Stanford University.

**Rob Glaser** Mr. Rob Glaser of Seattle, Washington, is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Real Works, an Internet company focused on using multimedia and on-line communications technologies. Prior to founding Real Networks, he served as Vice President for Multimedia and Consumer Systems at Microsoft Corporation. Mr. Glaser holds a B.A., a B.S. and an M.A. from Yale University.

**Jim Goodman** Mr. Jim Goodman of Raleigh, North Carolina, is the President and CEO of Capitol Broadcasting Company, Inc., which has eleven wholly owned subsidiaries and has been a family business for three generations. Mr. Goodman attended Duke University.

**Paul La Camera** Mr. Paul La Camera of Newton, Massachusetts, is Vice President and General Manager of WCVB-TV, Channel 5 - Boston's ABC affiliate television station. Mr. La Camera's career in television began in community relations leading to station management, and includes many broadcast honors and awards, including several Peabody awards. Mr. La Camera

holds a B.A. from Holy Cross College, Worcester, MA, a Master of Journalism, and Master of Urban Studies from Boston University, and an M.B.A. from Boston College.

**Richard Masur** Mr. Richard Masur of Los Angeles, California, is an actor who has appeared on numerous television series and feature films. He is the President of the Screen Actors Guild and is on the Board of Directors of the Hollywood Policy Center and The Creative Coalition.

**Newton Minow** Mr. Newton Minow of Chicago, Illinois, is Counsel to the law firm of Sidley & Austin. He also serves as the Annenberg University Professor of Communications Policy and Law at Northwestern University. President Kennedy appointed him Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission in 1960. He served in the Kennedy Administration until 1963 when he became Executive Vice President and General Counsel of Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. Mr. Minow holds a B.A. and a J.D. from Northwestern University.

**Jose Luis Ruiz** Mr. Jose Luis Ruiz is the Executive Director of the National Latino Communications Center of Los Angeles, California. Since 1970, Mr. Ruiz has worked within the entertainment industry. Directing and producing both film and television, he has earned 11 Emmy nominations and 4 Emmy Awards. Mr. Ruiz has received recognition for both his community involvement and his professional accomplishments as well. Mr. Ruiz holds a B.A. from University of California, Los Angeles.

**Shelby Scott** Ms. Shelby Scott of Boston, Massachusetts, is President of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), an 80,000 member union of broadcast journalists, announcers, performers, writers, technicians, and others. She is currently a freelance reporter for WBZ-TV in Boston. Ms. Scott holds a B.A. from the University of Washington.

**Gigi Sohn** Ms. Gigi Sohn of Washington, D.C., is Executive Director of Media Access Project. The "American Lawyer" recently selected Ms. Sohn as one of the top 45 "Public Sector" lawyers under the age of 45. Ms. Sohn holds a B.S. from Boston University and a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Karen Peltz Strauss** Ms. Karen Peltz Strauss of Washington, D.C., is the legal counsel for telecommunications policy for the National Association of the Deaf. In this capacity, she represents deaf and hard of hearing communities on all matters pertaining to telecommunications access. She is a former supervising attorney for the National Center for Law and Deafness at Galludet University. Ms. Strauss holds a B.A. from Boston University, a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and an L.L.M. from Georgetown University.

**Cass R. Sunstein** Mr. Cass R. Sunstein of Chicago, Illinois, is the Karl N. Llewellyn Distinguished Professor of Jurisprudence at the University of Chicago. He is an expert in First Amendment issues. He is the author of Democracy and the Problem of Free Speech, 1995. Mr. Sunstein holds an A.B. from Harvard College and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

**Lois Jean White** Ms. Lois Jean White of Knoxville, Tennessee, is president-elect for the

national PTA, is a former member of the national PTA's Education Commission, Individual & Organizational Development Commission, and is past president of the Tennessee State PTA. She has also served as a member of the Board of the Knoxville Museum of Art. Ms. White holds a B.S. from Fisk University and has done extensive graduate work at Indiana University.

**James Yee** Mr. James Yee of San Francisco, California, is the Executive Director of the Independent Television Service (ITS), a non-profit organization funded by, but independent of, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, created to increase diversity and the scope of programming available to public television. Formerly he was the Executive Director at the National Asian American Telecommunications Association for 12 years. Mr. Yee received his B.A. in History from Fairleigh Dickinson University, his M.A. in Education from Antioch Graduate School of Education, and has done post graduate studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 22, 1997

**PRESIDENT CLINTON NAMES MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INTEREST OBLIGATIONS OF DIGITAL TELEVISION BROADCASTERS**

The Vice President today announced the President's intention to appoint the following individuals as Members of the Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters.

Mr. Charles Benton, of Chicago, Illinois, is currently Chairman and CEO of Public Media Incorporated, which is a distributor and publisher of film and video programs. He also serves as Chairman and CEO of the Benton Foundation, an organization whose mandate is to connect Americans with the emerging digital communications environment. Mr. Benton has extensive experience in the business, non-profit, and public service sectors. Mr. Benton holds a B.A. from Yale University and has completed graduate studies at Northwestern University and the National College of Education.

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The Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters was created by Executive Order on March 11, 1997, to study and make recommendations on the

public interest responsibilities accompanying broadcasters' receipt of digital television licenses. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 authorizes the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to issue licenses for digital television services under the condition that the broadcasters remain subject to public interest obligations as deemed appropriate by the FCC, and the return of the analog spectrum used for broadcasting television signals. The Committee is expected to submit a report to the Vice President regarding their findings on or before June 1998.

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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
WASHINGTON

February 25, 1998

**MEMORANDUM FOR FRANK RAINES**

**FROM:** Jim Kohlenberger, Senior Domestic Policy Advisor to the Vice President  
and Special Assistant for Science and Technology 

**RE:** Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of  
Digital Television Broadcasters

In March 1997, the President established an Advisory Committee to consider and report on the public interest obligations that digital television broadcasters should assume. Under the March Executive Order, the Committee is to report back to the Vice President on or before June 1, 1998. It took a number of months for members to be appointed to the Advisory Committee, and the Committee began its work on October 22, 1997. There is general agreement among the Committee members that adherence to the June 1, 1998, deadline would not afford the Committee sufficient time to gather necessary information, consider that information, deliberate on possible conclusions, and prepare the required report. The Committee Co-Chairs, Leslie Moonves and Norman Ornstein, have accordingly requested that the deadline for submission of the Advisory Committee's report be extended until October 1, 1998, and the Vice President has acceded to their request.

A proposed Executive Order effectuating this change is attached to this Memorandum. Please take such steps as are necessary for adoption of this Order. The next meeting of the Advisory Committee is March 2, 1998.

AMENDMENT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 13038, ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC INTEREST OBLIGATIONS OF DIGITAL TELEVISION BROADCASTERS

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America and to extend the reporting deadline of the Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters, it is hereby ordered that Executive Order 13038, as previously amended, is further amended by deleting "June 1, 1998" in Section 2 and inserting "October 1, 1998" in lieu thereof.

THE WHITE HOUSE,

# Los Angeles Times

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1998  
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## LOS ANGELES TIMES EDITORIALS



MARK H. WILLES, *Publisher*

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JANET CLAYTON, *Editor of the Editorial Pages and Vice President*

### Airwave Avarice

In 1996, when Congress was considering giving broadcasters boughfront property on the information superhighway—a portion of the TV airwaves that would have fetched taxpayers up to \$70 billion in an auction—Sen. Bob Dole wisely objected: “We don’t give away trees to newspaper publishers. Why should we give away more airwaves to broadcasters?”

But the broadcast lobby, mightier than the Senate majority leader, prevailed, and Congress essentially gave each major broadcaster a chunk of new “digital” frequency. There was one caveat: In exchange for getting one of the last great swaths of public road estate in America, broadcasters understood that they must take on some new public-interest obligations, to be determined by a panel of broadcasters, consumer advocates and others. It was named the Gore Commission because of Vice President Al Gore’s role in telecommunications policy.

Next week the commission will release its report: if the proposed final draft now being circulated among commission members is any indication, it will be a national scandal.

Caving in to pressure from Leslie Moonves, CBS Television president and Gore Commission co-chairman, the report’s drafters chose to not even ask that broadcasters use their new channels to provide some free air time to political candidates. Such a requirement would go a long way toward eliminating the legalized bribery that’s at the heart of corruption in American politics, wherein candidates are forced to accept large contributions from special interests in order to buy commercial time from TV broadcasters.

The Gore report, far from requiring free air time, actually has the gall to say the FCC should eliminate rules requiring broadcasters to charge political candidates their “lowest unit rate” for campaign ads. Broadcasters

could offset the higher prices, says the report, by agreeing to provide “some free time” of their own choosing to candidates—say, two minutes after 3 a.m. The current system, in which candidates pay broadcasters hundreds of millions of dollars each year to reach the American people on airwaves those people own, is an outrage. But the Gore Commission is making it even worse.

The report fails to stand up for the public in numerous other ways. It fails, for example, to require broadcasters to air children’s educational programming on their main digital channel (the new spectrum can be divided into as many as six channels) or to require that broadcasters forbid alcohol and tobacco ads during hours when children’s programming is aired.

So concerned is the commission about burdening broadcasters that it even recommends that national leaders, in developing emergency broadcast services to communicate with Americans during a national catastrophe, be “minimally intrusive on bandwidth” and refrain from imposing any undue additional costs on broadcasters.

Broadcasters are already planning to cash in on their new digital stations in ways Congress had not anticipated—by launching interactive shopping, for instance, in which a broadcaster could make \$10 every time a viewer double-clicked on the image of Jerry on the screen to order a Seinfeld T-shirt.

If broadcasters are unwilling to give something back to society in return for using the public airwaves, then the Clinton administration and Congress should take those airwaves back and do what they should have done in 1996: auction them off and use the money for the public good. That’s similar to what President Abraham Lincoln did, using money from the sale of public lands to build the nation’s great land-grant universities.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Vice President

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For Immediate Release  
Friday, June 12, 1998

Contact:  
(202) 456-7035

**VICE PRESIDENT GORE ANNOUNCES \$450 MILLION PROPOSAL  
TO HELP PUBLIC BROADCASTERS ENTER THE DIGITAL AGE**

*Calls on public and private sectors to create "digital parks, libraries and museums for kids"*

Monterey, CA -- At remarks before the Conference on Digital Media Content for Children and Teens, Vice President Gore announced today that the administration is sending legislation to Congress to provide public broadcasters with \$450 million over five years.

The funds will help broadcasters transition from analog to digital transmissions. This technology allows them to provide 4-6 additional channels and new innovative television applications, including high definition and interactive television broadcasts.

"This is something even Oscar the Grouch could be happy about," said the Vice President. "These funds will help ensure that instead of having 500 channels with nothing on, we'll have 500 channels where children may discover the wonders of learning."

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 10, 1999

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: BRUCE REED, DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL  
DAVID BEIER, OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT, DOMESTIC POLICY

FROM: PAUL WEINSTEIN, DPC  
JIM KOHLENBERGER, OVP  
AUDREY CHOI, OVP  
LISA BROWN, OVP

SUBJECT: **Free Time and the Public Interest Advisory Committee (PIAC) on Digital Television**

ACTION-FORCING EVENT

Last Fall, the PIAC submitted its final report making a series of recommendations on broadcasting policy to the Administration, including the issue of free television time for candidates for political office.

BACKGROUND

After free time was dropped from the McCain-Feingold campaign finance bill, you appointed a Presidential Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters in October 1997. Its mandate was to provide advice and recommendations about the nature and scope of broadcasters' public interest obligations - including, but not limited to, free air time.

To advance free air time you asked the FCC in your 1998 State of the Union to require broadcasters to provide free time to candidates for political office. Two weeks after that request, Chairman Kennard signaled his intention to launch a proceeding on free or reduced-rate air time in spring of 1998. However, opposition from the Hill was strong and swift. Opponents threatened to use the appropriations process to punish the FCC if it moved forward on free time without a mandate from Congress. Senator Hollings said the FCC should "leave it alone or...run for Congress." Senator Gregg essentially threatened the FCC with elimination while Representative Rogers demanded a written statement prior to mark-up from the FCC that it would not move forward on free air time rulemakings.