

ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY IN BROADCASTING

The issue:

The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) supports initiatives to improve diversity in broadcasting and create new opportunities for women, people of color and other underrepresented communities.

- Unfortunately, recent data shows **only single-digit broadcast station ownership by women and people of color**. Access to capital continues to be a barrier to diverse ownership.

Why it matters:

During the 117th Congress, legislation was introduced that would help women, people of color and underrepresented voices realize their dreams of owning a radio or television station.

- **The Expanding Broadcast Ownership Opportunities Act** (H.R. 4871, 117th Congress) was introduced in the House by **Rep. G.K. Butterfield (NC-01)** and **Rep. Steven Horsford (NV-04)**.
- **Sens. Gary Peters (MI)** and **Robert Menendez (NJ)** introduced the Broadcast Varied Ownership Incentives for Community Expanded Service Act, also known as the **Broadcast VOICES Act** (S. 2456, 117th Congress), in the Senate.

These legislative efforts would **reinstate a diversity tax certificate program** at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which broadcasters support.

- First established in 1978, the FCC program provided a tax incentive to those who sold their majority interest in a broadcast station to diverse individuals.
- From 1978 to 1995, the program was highly effective in leveling the playing field for underrepresented broadcasters, **increasing diverse ownership in broadcast stations by more than 550%**.
- Unfortunately, Congress repealed this program in 1995. **Broadcasters opposed this repeal** because of the program's dramatic and positive impact.
- The tax certificate has proven to be an effective mechanism for bringing more women and people of color into station ownership and assisting with addressing the access to capital issue.
- In addition to NAB, these bills were supported by Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC), Hispanic Federation, League of United Latin American Citizens, Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC), National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters (NABOB), National Urban League and the United States Black Chambers.
- Additional supporters included nine former FCC chairs: **Newton N. Minow** (1961-1963), **Richard E. Wiley** (1974-1977), **Reed E. Hundt** (1993-1997), **William E. Kennard** (1997-2001), **Michael K. Powell** (2001-2005), **Michael J. Copps** (2009), **Julius Genachowski** (2009-2013), **Mignon Clyburn** (2013) and **Tom Wheeler** (2013-2017).

The bottom line:

Congress should pass legislation to ensure increased access to capital and diverse representation in broadcast station ownership, such as the Broadcast VOICES Act and Expanding Broadcast Ownership Opportunities Act.