

MEMORANDUM

From: Jessica González, Policy Counsel, National Hispanic Media Coalition
Date: February 10, 2010
Re: Pushing back against hate and misinformation in the media

WHY YOU SHOULD GET INVOLVED IN THE FCC PROCEEDING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION NEEDS IN A DIGITAL AGE:

On January 21, 2010, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) launched an examination into the future of media and information needs of communities in a digital age.¹ “The objective of this review is to assess whether all Americans have access to vibrant, diverse sources of news and information that will enable them to enrich their lives, their communities and our democracy.”² **Comments are due March 8th**. After considering the public comments, the FCC will issue a report providing an “assessment of the current media landscape, analyze policy options and, as appropriate, make policy recommendations to the FCC, other government entities and other parties.”³ The more public comments the FCC receives on hate speech, the more difficult it will be for the agency to continue ignoring the problem. This may be our only chance to be heard on an issue that is greatly affecting the Latino community and others that are commonly the targets of hate speech!

WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THE FCC ASK IN THIS PROCEEDING?

In this proceeding the Commission asks a broad array of questions, the most relevant of which are listed below in bullet-point format. I encourage you to read through the questions and decide which ones you believe merit your response. You do not have answer all of the

¹ Public Notice DA 10-100, GN Dkt. No. 10-25 (rel. Jan. 21, 2010).

² *Id.* at 1.

³ *Id.*

questions. In fact, if only one strikes you as important or you have limited time, you can respond to just one question.

The FCC, in addressing the future of media, asks the following questions:

- What are the information needs of citizens and communities? Do they have all the information they want and need? Has the situation changed during the past few years?
- How do young people receive educational and educational media content? How do they consider and process news and information provided to them? How should these patterns affect policy?
- Are media consumption patterns different in minority communities? How would those differences affect business models for various media platforms? What are the implications for the availability of news and information in minority communities? How should such business models and their implications affect government policy?
- How can we measure the importance of the availability of local news and information for community health and consumers' needs? Are there ways of measuring the vibrancy of local news and information flow and correlating such metrics to positive community outcomes, such as school quality, voter turnout, other forms of civic participation, improved public health, effective emergency responses, crime, reduced political corruption, or the development of social capital in general?
- Compared to earlier decades, are Americans more or less likely to seek and find more specialized media? What are the consequences of such patterns?
- How have the changes of availability of different types of news and information consumption affected different demographic groups? Are benefits or problems concentrated by income, age, geography, educational level, race, gender, religion, or other factors?
- What categories of journalism are in jeopardy in the digital age? Which are likely to flourish?
- With regard to national and local broadcasting (commercial and noncommercial), what have been the trends, and what is the current state of affairs, regarding news staffing and coverage? What types of coverage or programming have been changed, and in what manner?
- Should broadcasters' (commercial and noncommercial) and cable and satellite providers' public interest obligations be strengthened, relaxed, or otherwise re-conceptualized in this digital era? Should those obligations be applied to a broader range of media or tech companies? Have the FCC's past approaches been effective?

- How would open Internet and universal broadband policies affect the likelihood that the Internet will meet the information needs of communities? Are there search engine practices that might positively affect web-based efforts to provide news or information?
- What role will mobile devices play in meeting the news and information needs of communities during the next five to ten years? What is the impact of those trends for consumers, businesses, and policymakers? Should that role be reflected in the FCC's regulation of the industries involved?
- What are the trends in staffing and coverage at newspapers and print magazines? What impacts do staff cuts have on the ability of electronic media to serve communities news and information needs?
- What other subject areas should be studied or additional data be collected? What research topics would further the work already being done in the academic community relevant to the questions asked here?
- What questions have we failed to ask that we should?

HOW DO I FILE COMMENTS?

Comments can be filed in a variety of ways, and the process is relatively simple. You can (1) file your comments electronically by going to <http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/ecfs/upload/display?z=62dp4>, or (2) file paper comments through the U.S. Postal Service. If you file paper comments you must include an original and four copies, and the comments must include the docket number: GN Docket Number 10-25. They should be addressed as follows:

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

For more information please see the FCC's Public Notice at

http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-10-100A1.pdf. You can also call Steven

Waldman at the FCC at (202) 418-05301 or William Freedman at the FCC at (202) 418-1415.