

NHMC Announces 2010 Media Policy Priorities

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Washington, D.C. - Yesterday the National Hispanic Media Coalition's (NHMC) Board of Directors unanimously approved the organization's 2010 Federal Policy Priorities. NHMC's ambitious 2010 policy agenda includes but is not limited to the following:

CAMPAIGN AGAINST HATE SPEECH IN MEDIA: NHMC will 1) urge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to act on our 2009 petition for inquiry and open a docket on hate speech in media; 2) follow up on our requests that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) update its 1993 report, *The Role of Telecommunications in Hate Crimes*. This report is necessary to document the actual incidence of hate speech in media and provide the necessary evidence for decision-makers to take action on this important issue; and 3) in partnership with the UCLA/Chicano Studies Research Center, build upon a pilot study that developed a scientific methodology to quantify hate speech in media.

DIVERSIFYING MEDIA OWNERSHIP: According to Free Press, 93% of the radio and television stations in this country are owned by non-minorities. Only 7% of the media pie is left for people of color, and only 2.6% of those stations are owned by Latinos. NHMC will advocate for the FCC to redefine "eligible entities" to include small and disadvantaged businesses. NHMC will also promote the reinstatement of minority tax certificates. Finally, we will advocate that media ownership rules be maintained or strengthened to combat media consolidation, which is known to further obstruct minorities' access to the airwaves.

LOCAL COMMUNITY RADIO ACT: The NHMC ardently supports this legislation that will expand low power FM radio stations throughout the country. Although minorities make up almost a third of the country's population, they own only 7.7% of full-power commercial radio stations. Women, who make up more than half of the population, own only about 6%. Low-power FM stations won't entirely solve this problem, but they could alter the homogeneous radio environment by adding diversity to our radio station selections. NHMC remains optimistic that this legislation will pass in the 111th Congress.

PUBLIC INTEREST OBLIGATIONS FOR BROADCASTER LICENSEES: As hate speech in media increases, the importance of public interest obligations for broadcast licensees grows even clearer. In a world of media consolidation, media content originates from a handful of moguls that seemingly care only about the bottom line with little regard for responsible journalism, quality programming and localism.

UNIVERSAL BROADBAND: High speed Internet quickly evolved from a luxury to a necessity when employers and schools began requiring that applicants apply online. To be competitive in this nation one must have broadband access. Affordable broadband must be available in all areas. Without high-speed connectivity people are disadvantaged by the inability to quickly access information that is oftentimes a vital resource in emergencies, and for educational, occupational, health and other needs. Latinos as a group lag behind in broadband access, and this must be rectified.

NETWORK NEUTRALITY: Once individuals have access to affordable broadband, it is imperative that their Internet connections be open and neutral. Internet service providers should not be allowed to discriminate against or interfere with online content. Regulations are necessary to ensure that people of color, already sorely under and misrepresented on mainstream media, are allowed to tell their own stories online.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS ACT: NHMC supports the Performance Rights Act and urge that it become law in this 111th Congress. It is only fair that performers receive compensation for the songs that they make popular. Performers already receive royalties when their songs are played over satellite, cable and the Internet, and this legislation will help close an arcane loophole that allows the highly profitable radio industry to avoid paying artists what they rightly deserve.

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