



NEWS

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

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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:
March 12, 2010

News Media contact:
John Giusti at (202) 418-2000

Statement of Commissioner Michael J. Copps On a Major New Study of the Los Angeles Media Market

Commissioner Michael J. Copps today said a just-released Norman Lear Center study only deepened his concern over the decline of local news on the broadcast airwaves.

“I was worried before the study was released,” said Commissioner Copps. “Now I’m flat out alarmed.”

The study shows that, in a typical half-hour news broadcast, hard stories about local government amount to less than a half a minute. “How’s that for keeping people informed?” Copps asked.

The investigators of the study by the Norman Lear Center at the USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism—“Local TV News in the Los Angeles Media Market: Are Stations Serving the Public Interest?”—examined news programs on 8 broadcast stations in the Los Angeles Media Market chronicling 980 half hours and 11,253 news stories. In a typical half hour, 10 minutes and 35 seconds was devoted to advertisements and teasers. An additional 3:36 was spent on sports and weather. In terms of news: Crime stories took up 2:50 and led the broadcasts a third of the time.

“This is not picking on the good folks of L.A. I’ve been in all four corners of the country where this is unfortunately the case. This study should be incorporated into the work being done at the FCC on the Information Needs of Communities in a Digital Era. This is an evidential versus anecdotal perspective of local broadcast news and the results are most troubling. The digital divide continues to separate our lower income, less educated members of society from broadband media, and we simply cannot afford to turn a blind eye to the media that those Americans without broadband are receiving.”

“I look forward to a comprehensive FCC report dealing with the information needs of our communities to be completed in late summer and proceed to action by year’s end. There’s no time to be wasted.”

The study was commissioned by the Civic Alliance of Los Angeles over a concern that citizens were not receiving the information they needed to fulfill their obligation in terms of voting and participating in the public dialogue. “Unfortunately, it seems as if their fears have been confirmed,” Copps said.

“People are still receiving much of their news over the airwaves as numerous recent studies have shown,” said Commissioner Cops. “Anyone dubious or skeptical of these findings and how they relate to their own community should do one simple thing: Watch your news with a stopwatch and then ask if your needs are being met.”