

FCC: Issues: Radio -- Digital Audio Broadcasting

Written by Emmy

Wednesday, 16 June 2010 01:41 -

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Legal Center Assists in Formal Comments Filed

In an effort to foster political discourse on the broadcast airwaves, the Campaign Legal Center assisted other public interest groups in drafting portions of formal comments filed at the FCC on digital audio broadcast (DAB) radio services. As radio broadcasters convert to a digital format, they are able to provide multiple channels and other interactive data features on their allocated spectrum. The FCC had requested comment on licensing rule changes necessary to address the new DAB format, including comments on the public interest obligations of broadcasters. In comments filed on June 16, the Center and the public interest coalition urged the FCC to apply all current political broadcasting obligations, including reasonable access and equal opportunities, to digital radio services. In addition to requesting expansion of reasonable access rights to include state and local candidates, the Center asked the FCC to strengthen lowest unit charge and disclosure rules related to political programming and advertising.

On August 2, 2004, the Center and the public interest coalition filed replied comments with the FCC commending the Commission for its "forward-thinking FNPRM and proactive exploration of public interest obligations for digital audio broadcasting." The comments more specifically focused on two themes: (1) "Public interest obligations that exist now should also apply to any other service a broadcaster chooses to provide with its new DAB capabilities;" and (2) "The more benefit a broadcaster receives from its spectrum, the more benefit the public should receive as well."

[Click here to view the comments.](#)

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FCC Explores Rules for Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB)

On April 15, 2004, the FCC launched a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Notice of Inquiry (FNPRM) seeking comment on licensing rule changes necessary to address the new digital audio broadcast (DAB) format. Along with questions on technical considerations, the FNPRM asks for comment on application of the FCC's existing **public interest** and programming rules to DAB. Of particular interest to the Center, Commissioner Michael Copps stated that the proceeding seeks comment

"on how the statutory political broadcasting rules apply and how digital audio

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broadcasting can enhance political discourse."

[Click here to view the FCC's Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on DAB.](#)

[Click here to view the FCC's April 15, 2004 press release on DAB.](#)

[Click here to view Chairman Powell's statement.](#)

[Click here to view Commissioner Copps' statement.](#)

[Click here to view Commissioner Adelstein's statement.](#)

[Click here to read the full text of the comments.](#)