

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Robert E. Latta**  
**Subcommittee on Communications and Technology**  
**“Lifting Voices: Legislation to Promote Media Marketplace Diversity.”**  
**January 15, 2020**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Good morning, and welcome to our first hearing of the new year. I would like to start by thanking my Democratic colleagues for continuing to work with us last year to complete many of the bipartisan priorities that began under the leadership of Committee Republicans. Our multi-Congress effort is now close to bearing fruit on issues like broadband mapping and supply chain security. We will continue to push these measures forward but for now, I want to thank my friends across the aisle for committing to hold today’s hearing in that same bipartisan spirit. I also want to note that during our majority, we tended to have educational hearings dedicated to understanding the issues we sought to legislate. Although we are moving straight to a legislative hearing today, I appreciate my colleagues’ reaching across the aisle to hold a hearing on such an important and timely topic, with the Martin Luther King Junior holiday just around the corner.

Traditionally, discussions on Capitol Hill and over at the Federal Communications Commission about the media marketplace have focused on the examination of Media Ownership rules; and I know, Mr. Chairman, we may have differing views on that topic. But today, we are here to discuss ideas on how we can promote diversity in the media

marketplace—a goal all of us on this dais share. The FCC regulates broadcast stations with the goal of promoting a diversity of voices that best serve the public interest. Therefore, in an ever-changing media marketplace, it is essential that the FCC consistently take a look at how its rules and regulations reflect the media landscape and see if they continue to promote diversity. That is why I am pleased to be considering legislation today from Representative Billy Long, H.R. 5567, the MEDIA Diversity Act, that requires the FCC to collect information that considers market entry barriers for socially disadvantaged individuals in the communications marketplace.

Although the ideas and concepts presented in today's hearing are not an exhaustive list, they represent a good first step toward considering how to increase opportunities and lift the voices of underrepresented groups in media.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank broadcasters and MVPDs for taking numerous voluntary steps to promote viewpoint, ownership, and employment diversity. Many have established programs to hire and promote women, people of color, and veterans into executive leadership positions, or programs to encourage local journalism that reflects the communities these media entities serve. I know broadcasters and MVPDs are taking big strides to ensure the news and entertainment

they produce reflects the interests of people in the communities they serve.

Despite these steps forward, more work must be done. I welcome today's testimony and look forward to hearing any additional ideas the panelists or others may have on how we may better promote media diversity without a heavy hand of onerous regulation on media entities.

Thank you, and I yield the balance of my time.