

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Greg Walden  
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 today’s hearing on promoting media diversity. While we have traditionally talked about promoting media diversity as it relates to the FCC’s quadrennial review of media ownership regulations, today’s hearing will *instead* focus on how to better understand the problem before us and how best to incentivize all media entities to create opportunities for and lift the voices of underrepresented individuals, as the hearing title suggests.

I understand the efforts the broadcast industry – and the media industry as a whole – takes to ensure diversity of ownership, viewpoint, and employment. As a former broadcaster and radio station owner, I believe I am the only person on this dais who has had to make those hiring decisions for a broadcast station. I know firsthand the business imperative to serve your local audience with local news and programming specific to your community, and what happens to advertising revenue when you don’t ensure a rich diversity of content.

So, I appreciate the many steps that industry has taken to not only recognize and take responsibility for the problem, but also the many programs and initiatives they have put in place to promote opportunities

for women, minorities, and veterans, and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about these today.

I also want to mention that while this hearing is a great step forward to evaluate steps that can be taken to promote diversity in broadcasting, we can't solve the problem without looking at this issue across the media marketplace. The tech industry has increasingly become a prime competitor to traditional broadcasters and multichannel video programming distributors, or MVPDs. One of the biggest problems facing the broadcast industry is a lack of financing, and as any businessperson knows, it is difficult to create opportunities when there is a lack of cash flow. However, billions of dollars are being poured into creating more content now than ever before, which provides ample opportunity to promote diversity in programming. In addition to the focus on creating opportunities in executive leadership positions for minorities, women, and veterans, I'm pleased to see other industry efforts underway that provide opportunities to diverse candidates for roles at every step of the content creation process. While I recognize the FCC does not have jurisdiction of over-the-top services, these services nonetheless should be an element of our conversation examining voluntary efforts to promote diversity.

Where the Commission can play a role, it appears they have. And while I won't get into the reasons about why some of this progress has been halted by the courts, it is important that we focus on the larger issue at hand: how to promote opportunity. Some of the bills before us today represent an important step forward to promote diversity in the broadcast industry but as I'm sure our witnesses will acknowledge, more work can be done.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their bipartisan work on this issue and I yield back.