

issues - Communications

Communications

Fairness and Accountability in Broadcasting Act

[Click here to view the FAB Act](#)

Major Provisions

To ensure that all radio and television broadcasters are accountable to the local communities they are licensed to serve, that they offer diverse views on issues of public importance including local issues, and that they provide regular opportunities for meaningful public dialogue among listeners, viewers, and station personnel and licensees.

1. All broadcast licensees are required to cover issues of importance to their local communities in a fair manner taking into account the diverse interests and viewpoints in the local community;
2. The period of license for all broadcast stations shall be reduced from 8 years to 4 years.
3. All broadcast licensees will be required to hold two public hearings each year in each community of license during the 4 year period of license to ascertain the needs and interests of the communities they are licensed to serve. One of these hearings must take place within two months of the date of license renewal. Transcripts of these hearings shall be placed on a timely basis in the station's public file, kept on-line and submitted to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as a part of the license renewal proceedings. All interested citizens must be afforded the opportunity to participate in these hearings.
4. All broadcast licensees must document and report in writing on a biannual basis to the FCC how they have covered the ascertained issues of public importance, and how their coverage reflects the diverse interests and viewpoints in their community. These documents must also be placed in a timely basis in the station's public file and on-line.
5. Petitions to deny license renewals filed at the FCC on the grounds of clear bias, or the failure to hold hearings, ascertain public needs, or document and report on the manner in which fairness and diversity have been addressed in local programming will be reviewed by the Commission. Findings of any prima facie violations by the Commission based on citizen petitions will result in an official FCC hearing in the local community of license to further investigate the charges. Sanctions and fines, including a revocation of the broadcast license shall be considered by the Commission.
6. The FCC shall report annually to Congress on petitions to deny received and the FCC's decisions regarding those petitions.

Additional Links:

January 26, 2005- Rep. Slaughter hosted an expert panel discussion on fairness and accountability in broadcasting.

[Click here for more information on the panel and the FAB Act.](#)

[Click here to read the article on Slaughter's bill published on salon.com](#)