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For Immediate Release

The National Black Religious Broadcasters Urge Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to Keep the Viewability Rule in Place

Rule change will deny our members the right to spread the Gospel

Washington, DC - The National Black Religious Broadcasters (NBRB) is a national coalition of over 10,000 black religious broadcasters would like to express our concerns that the expiration of the "viewability" rule could have a serious negative impact on viewers of faith-based programming throughout the country. Much of this programming is viewed on must-carry television stations.

We would like to ensure that our content reaches everyone who would like to see it – including those consumers that cannot afford, or are not aware that they need, a new cable box.

The Rev. Sheldon Williams, President of NBRB says, "if the FCC changes the viewability rule this would be grossly unfair to black religious broadcasters throughout the country. Therefore, we strongly urge the Federal Communications Commission to extend the rule because many of our 10,000 members will be directly and adversely affected by the in action of the FCC. NBRB believe that by extending the viewability rule it will signal the FCC commitment to small and independent broadcasters. We plan to work hard to make sure that this extension is a reality"

As we understand it, the Commission is considering letting the rule that now makes sure must-carry stations be viewable by *all* cable viewers expire. We fear that this could have a devastating impact on our viewers, because many of them rely on analog cable service. Currently, roughly 22 percent of cable subscribers rely on analog service and many more use analog service on second and third TVs.

The end of the viewability rule would allow cable providers to basically cut off must-carry stations from those viewers. In order to access our content, these consumers would be forced to go through the hassle and expense of purchasing and installing a new converter box. Ending the viewability rule would transfer the burden of complying with these requirements from cable providers to consumers.

The end of the rule also will reduce programming diversity. Our broadcasters offer unique faith-based programming targeting often underserved audiences. The stations that carry our programs are generally independent and cannot afford the lost viewership that is likely to result from allowing the current viewability rule to expire.

Today broadcast television is also making great strides in offering new opportunities for African-American voices, and now is the wrong time to take a step backward. NBRB members are not asking for a special rule or favor. We believe that cable providers should not have the ability to discriminate against small local broadcast stations that serve audiences who desire faith-based programming.

About NBRB

The National Black Religious Broadcasters (NBRB) is a national coalition of over 10,000 black religious broadcasters throughout the country who utilize broadcast and cable television, the internet and radio to host their ministries and spread the gospel according to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. ¹⁷And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

NBRB truly believes in the Great Commission, the ethics and teachings of Jesus and His commandment over our lives. This verse of scripture is the central cause of our missionary zeal to spread the Good News through broadcast and cable television, radio and internet. We intend to save the world with this powerful gospel.