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REMARKS AT NON-COMMERCIAL/PUBLIC MEDIA WORKSHOP
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Good morning and welcome to the FCC. It's a great day for us to have here such a distinguished cast of panelists and other characters—perhaps as impressive a group as we have *ever* assembled here. The subject at hand—the future of our media and our media's journalism—could not be more timely. I know doing something about the challenged state of media and media's journalism is at the very top of my bucket list and I think many of you are in the same place as I am on that one.

At first glance, it appears we have two problems here. The first is the very immediate challenge confronting traditional media. The news and information component of media is, without going into details we all know, on life support—where there is still life. The second is the future of online media. We need to be addressing both. But in fact, they're not two challenges—they are one. They go to the heart of democracy's always-enduring challenge: making sure we have an information infrastructure in this country that provides citizens with what they need to know so they can make intelligent decisions about their future.

This challenge is as new as high-speed Internet and as old as the Founders. Go back to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison and you can see them struggling with this. It was a big challenge for them because they knew that their experiment in government—building and maintaining a far-flung democracy that was spreading across a continent—depended upon an informed citizenry. They thought about it and then they acted, deciding that the second heaviest expenditure of their new government would be the provision of postal subsidies to get newspapers out to the people. Newspapers of every stripe, most quite partisan, all deemed necessary. We all remember the famous Jefferson quote that, if he had to choose between a government without newspapers or newspapers without government, he'd take the latter—newspapers without government. But he didn't stop there, because our always-diligent friends at Free Press dug up the rest of the Jefferson quotation, which was this: “But I should mean that every man should receive those papers, and be capable of reading them.” Jefferson's generation worked hard to get the information out and it started down the track of making sure we had an informed and educated electorate.

Isn't this the same challenge *we* have? The technology and the lingo may change, but the small “d” democratic challenge endures. It always will. It's the challenge we face now in fixing what's wrong with our traditional media—and that's a lot—and building new media. It's behind the need to get broadband out—it's about deployment, it's about adoption, it's about literacy. In our day, digital literacy. Media literacy. That's why we need that K-12 literacy curriculum I have stressed before. We live in a multimedia environment and one that our kids, my grandkids, will need to understand. They need the tools to know how to navigate the information available, how to discern truth from fiction, opinion from cold hard facts. And they need to know not just how to

use new media, but how new media can use—or misuse—them. I am pleased that our new National Broadband Plan tees this issue up.

Public media is the jewel of American broadcasting. Public media appeals so often to the better angels of our nature and you folks from public media take so seriously your role to use the people's airwaves for real national purposes. Don't get me wrong—I'm not here to say you're perfect or there aren't things left undone, but what you have accomplished—with the poverty of public support you endure—is amazing. I get embarrassed every time I think about the average per capita, per annum government expenditure on supporting public media. It's \$1.35! As someone remarked, that cup of coffee you brought in here this morning cost more than that. Compared with the \$50, \$75, \$100 and more of per capita, per annum support other democracies put into quality media, it's really paltry. And it is totally inadequate to the needs of the nation.

Even without adequate support, good things continue and promising new developments seem to be proliferating. I had the chance recently to have a dialogue with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's board—and I would be remiss if I didn't thank Ernie Wilson for his leadership and dedicated service of that august assemblage of leaders. I was particularly pleased to learn that the CPB has recently announced a \$10.5 million investment in Local Journalism Centers to promote collaborative reporting on issues of concern to individual communities. Quality news experiments are being conducted across the country. This is a great sign of innovation and creativity working with new media. I think it's critically important that there are more, not less, journalists on the beat, reporting on the stories that are necessary to our everyday lives. This is a commitment that Knight Foundation and Ford Foundation, among many others, have made and we are grateful for your forward thinking in working to fill the significant gaps.

But with each finger that is plugged into the dike, 15-20 more leaks spring up. So in addition to all the wonderful experiments going on to build successful models for getting honest-to-god journalism out to our citizens, we need to be open to talking about the enhancement of public support for public media. We need a robust dialogue across the country, like we are having here today, thinking about and talking about what role Public Media and non-commercial media should play and how the government might be involved in a constructive way. This has to be an important part of our national dialogue on the future of media, the future of journalism. Oh, sure, the talking heads of raging cable and gabfest radio will try to put you on the defensive—you're "regulators" or "Maoists" or whatever other labels they can think of to avoid the issue and to enflame the people. My advice: we need to stop playing defense and get on the offense. Worry less about labels and more about substance. ***What we have in this country right now with too much of our media is a bad case of substance abuse.*** Facts go undug. Investigative journalism is an endangered species. Far fewer reporters walk the beat. So we turn to opinion. Now I love opinion. I have many of my own. Each of us is entitled to our own set of opinions. Each of us is *not* entitled to our own set of facts. That's why doing something about the news—real news—is so important. This place, the FCC, can start with broadcast and figure ways to make sure the public airwaves are providing more than infotainment, more than "if it bleeds it leads" local news, and more coverage of what

diverse people in our thousands of diverse communities are doing and contributing, more coverage of the information we need to make intelligent decisions for our shared future.

There are many more questions, and I'm sure today will show us there are many more, and better, ideas out there waiting to be heard. That's why I'm grateful for the presence of so many smart and committed people here today.

I don't want to take more of your time since I know you have a full day of panels scheduled, but I really can't sit down without recognizing that today is a huge milestone in America's media history. Tonight *Bill Moyers' Journal* will air its final program. One of the best and happiest things that has happened to me in my nine years at this place has been the opportunity to get to know Bill and, even better, to have his friendship. I'll be frank—he's one of my real heroes. I have had the good fortune to be on his absolutely stellar program—I think it's the best program of all—most recently last week in what was his second-to-final *Journal*. I can think of no journalist, now or at any time across the annals of our past, who has contributed so much to democracy's dialogue. The world of fact and the world of ideas are his beat, and he seems always to arrive at his conclusions only after digging first and digging deep for the facts—a kind of intellectual induction too rarely seen on what passes for issues programming these days. He is all the inspiration we should need here today to give this Workshop the creative force I hope it develops. So as I leave the podium, I ask you to join me in a round of applause for what this good man has contributed to our media and to our country and to wish him all good things as he continues to work, in what I'm sure will be creative new ways, for the betterment of us all.

Thank you.