

March 7, 2014

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte  
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary  
United States House of Representatives  
6<sup>th</sup> District - Commonwealth of Virginia  
2309 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte:

It was a pleasure to visit with you in Washington last week, and I thank you for your ongoing service to our commonwealth and our country. I enjoyed updating you and your staff on the great work being done by the 3,000-plus Virginians who work at local broadcast television stations, and I appreciate your interest in learning more about the content and services we are delivering to our local audiences around the state.

On behalf of the Virginia Association of Broadcasters and the 25 local television stations serving Virginia and the greater Washington, DC metropolitan area, ***I am pleased to report that our commitment to local content and community service is stronger than ever, and on the rise.***

In 2013 the local television stations serving the Commonwealth of Virginia produced a total of ***57,044 hours of original, live, LOCAL, over-the-air newscasts.*** This represents an ***increase in live local news hours for a fourth consecutive year.*** Our digital momentum is perhaps the most tangible evidence of the growing importance our audience places on local content. In 2013 our collective local news and weather websites generated more than ***one billion page views,*** an ***increase of more than 20% in just one year.***

To demonstrate our growing commitment to our local communities, and the investment it takes to make that happen, please allow me to share these examples of ***job creation and improved local content in 2013-2014:***

- WSET-TV Lynchburg ***added a 24-hour-a-day local broadcast weather service*** that includes six local weather forecasts every hour, every day
- WSLS-TV Roanoke has ***added a full-time traffic reporter*** and the Timesaver Traffic software to better inform viewers of weather and construction-related traffic problems
- WDBJ-TV Roanoke ***added a local news bureau in Forest, VA***
- WHSV-TV Harrisonburg has invested in the industry best WSI 'TruVu' weather system, providing improved ***real-time weather data to Shenandoah Valley residents during times of severe, and potentially life-threatening, severe weather***

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- WVIR-TV Charlottesville maintains and **staffs a year-round bureau in Richmond** to keep local viewers abreast of developments in state government
- WUSA-TV Washington, DC has **created a new Digital / Mobile / Social media department including a new six-person staff**
- WWBT-TV Richmond **added a Digital Content Producer** to their news team to provide more breaking news and local weather via on-line and mobile platforms
- WJHL-TV Tri-Cities has **added three new local content staff positions in 2014**, including a digital content coordinator and writer/producer
- WJLA-TV Washington, DC is adding a 4pm newscast in 2014, **increasing live, local coverage to 19 hours per day**
- WRIC-TV Richmond has **added two positions to strengthen local content**, a second reporter for 'Good Morning Richmond' and a Digital Content Manager
- WAVY-TV / WVBT-TV Portsmouth have **added 10 hours per week to their news lineup** since September, serving the Hampton Roads community even further at 8am and 4pm
- WTVR-TV Richmond is **adding an online local content producer** in 2014
- WVEC-TV Norfolk is **adding a 4pm newscast in 2014 and creating four new positions**, two producers and two reporters, to staff the new program
- WCAV-TV Charlottesville **added a weekly local current affairs program, growing total local content to 33 hours per week**

In addition to the quantity of local news produced by television stations serving Virginians, we are equally proud of the **unique local impact** we are having in our communities:

- WDBJ-TV Roanoke **produced, coordinated, and aired the final statewide debate between Virginia's gubernatorial candidates** in October
- WHSV-TV Harrisonburg **aired a four-part series on "Gangs in the Valley", which local law enforcement is now using to educate local students** and keep them out of gangs
- WSET-TV Lynchburg in December aired a half-hour special, "Heroes From the Heart of Virginia", featuring **profiles of local veterans and highlighting services available to local veterans**
- WSLS-TV Roanoke provided **around-the-clock live web chats during winter storms in February**, allowing viewers to communicate directly with reporters and meteorologists
- WUSA-TV Washington, DC launched a transportation initiative that includes a live traffic feature on their news app and a **'pothole patrol' that alerts viewers to problems and tracks local government response**
- WCAV-TV Charlottesville **produced and aired a one-hour 2013 Virginia election special** featuring local and statewide candidates and races
- WJLA-TV Washington, DC on three occasions this winter has interrupted regular programming for **more than 20 hours of live continuing local weather coverage**

- WWBT-TV Richmond uses the “First Warning Weather” team to produce **three 30-minute specials annually that educate and empower viewers** with severe weather safety tips
- WTVR-TV Richmond is **partnering with AARP and The League of Women Voters to produce and televise a 2014 debate** between Virginia’s candidates for U.S. Senate
- WVEC-TV Norfolk **produced an educational special on The Affordable Care Act** in October 2013 – “Healthcare: The Bottom Line” – and preempted regular evening programming to air this documentary
- WAVY-TV Portsmouth during a 4-day period in January 2014 **provided more than 47 hours of local news, weather, and traffic** during a record-setting winter storm
- WCYB-TV Bristol in November **produced a 5-part educational series on The Affordable Care Act** – ‘Healthcare: In America’
- WJHL-TV Tri-Cities received an **Associated Press award for continuing, and potentially life-saving, coverage of a recent tornado outbreak**

Virginia broadcasters also take tremendous pride in all that we do to make our communities better places to live and work. The following are examples of ongoing initiatives led by local TV stations for the betterment of our audience:

- WSLS-TV Roanoke partners with the American Red Cross **to honor local firefighters and police officers who have saved lives**, through the ‘Celebration of Heroes’ project
- WDBJ-TV Roanoke was the lead sponsor on the Salvation Army’s Virtual Angel Tree program **collecting more than 10,000 toys, a 10% increase over the previous year**
- WHSV-TV Harrisonburg **collected more than \$100,000 in school supplies for local children** in their annual ‘Stuff the Bus’ back-to-school drive
- WSET-TV Lynchburg in partnership with ‘Gleaning for the World’ **raised \$1.3 million in monetary and product donations for the food banks of central Virginia** and disaster victims around the world
- WVIR-TV Charlottesville has produced 23 *local* Children’s Miracle Network Telethons **raising more than \$20 million for the Children’s Hospital of the University of Virginia**
- WTTG-TV Washington, DC has partnered with the Capital Area Food Bank for 10+ years on the “Stuff a Truck” food drive which now **collects nearly 50,000 lbs. of food annually**
- WUSA-TV Washington, DC teamed up with USO of Metro Washington for the 4th time this holiday season for ‘Turkeys for Troops’, **raising \$117,000 for local military families**
- WRC-TV Washington, DC for 20+ years has hosted the NBC4 Health & Fitness Expo, **the largest FREE annual consumer event of its kind**, with 85,000 attendees
- WJLA-TV Washington, DC has conducted 20 high school visits in the past year, presenting ‘Drive to Stay Alive’ **to educate thousands of teens on good driving habits**, and demonstrating the dangers of texting while driving and drunk driving

- WCYB-TV Bristol has partnered with the Mountain Empire chapter of the American Red Cross to present 'Celebration of Heroes', a **series of news stories and a banquet honoring community heroes** who have saved lives
- WRIC-TV Richmond in 2013 **raised \$100,000 for children fighting cancer** at Richmond's VCU Children's Hospital, through their annual 'Anthem Lemonaid' program
- WCAV-TV Charlottesville **produced the inaugural Salvation Army Telethon, raising \$86,000** to replace state funding that had been lost
- WWBT-TV Richmond aired 1,800 Angel Tree promos valued at \$156,000 during the holidays, **resulting in 42,000 gifts collected for needy families** in greater Richmond
- WVEC-TV Norfolk **helped a record 17,000 needy children** in Hampton Roads with the 2013 Salvation Army Angel Tree program
- WJHL-TV Tri-Cities **aired approximately 20,000 unpaid commercials for nonprofits in 2013**, valued at more than \$300,000
- WAVY-TV Norfolk holds regular events in local schools promoting "W82TXT", which has **encouraged thousands of teens to be safe drivers**
- WTVR-TV Richmond in 2013 **surpassed \$2.5 million in total money raised for the Massey Cancer Center** through the Monument Avenue 10k

As you can imagine, we are quite proud of our work to educate and inform our viewers, our obligation to keep Virginians safe and informed during times of crisis and disaster, and our efforts to improve the quality of life in communities all around the Commonwealth. I appreciate this opportunity to give you an in-depth look at our growing commitment to local news, local weather, and local community service.

As your committee conducts hearings on legislation that will impact local broadcasters and our local viewers, we would welcome the opportunity for a local broadcaster to testify to the growing investments we are making in our communities. I look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead to ensure that local television broadcasters can continue serving our local viewers in a way no one else can.

Yours truly,



Brad Ramsey  
President, Virginia Association of Broadcasters  
President & General Manager, WVEC-TV

Cc: The Honorable J. Randy Forbes, 4<sup>th</sup> District of Virginia  
The Honorable Bobby Scott, 3<sup>rd</sup> District of Virginia