Encourage Diversity in Broadcasting: Reinstate the Tax Certificate Program

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The issue:

The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) has consistently promoted initiatives aimed at improving diversity in broadcasting and creating new opportunities for women, people of color and other underrepresented communities.

- Recent data shows only **single-digit broadcast station ownership by women and people of color**, with access to capital continuing to be a barrier to increase such ownership.

Why it matters:

During the 118th Congress, legislation was introduced that would encourage investment in broadcast station ownership for women and people of color and dramatically help underrepresented voices realize their dreams of radio and television station ownership.

- **Rep. Steven Horsford (NV-04) and Sen. Gary Peters (MI)** introduced the Broadcast Varied Ownership Incentives for Community Expanded Service Act, also known as the Broadcast VOICES Act (H.R. 8072 and S. 4158, respectively, 118th Congress).

This legislative effort would **reinstate a diversity tax certificate program** at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). First established in 1978, the FCC program provided a tax incentive to those who sold their majority interest in a broadcast station to diverse individuals.

- From 1978 to 1995, the program was highly effective in leveling the playing field for underrepresented broadcasters, **increasing diverse ownership in broadcast stations by more than 550%.**

- Unfortunately, Congress repealed this program in 1995. **Broadcasters opposed this repeal** because of the program's dramatic and positive impact on increasing ownership of broadcast stations for diverse individuals. The tax certificate has proven to be an effective mechanism for bringing more women and people of color into station ownership and assisting with addressing the access to capital issue and, therefore, should be reinstated.

- In addition to NAB's support, the Broadcast VOICES Act has the backing of the Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC), Hispanic Federation, League of United Latin American Citizens, Multicultural Media, Telecom and

Internet Council (MMTC), National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters (NABOB), National Urban League and the United States Black Chambers.

- All 50 state broadcasting associations as well as broadcasting associations in Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico also support the Act.

- Additional supporters included nine former FCC Chairs: **Newton N. Minow** (1961-1963), **Richard E. Wiley** (1974-1977), **Reed E. Hundt** (1993-1997), **William E. Kennard** (1997-2001), **Michael K. Powell** (2001-2005), **Michael J. Copps** (2009), **Julius Genachowski** (2009-2013), **Mignon Clyburn** (2013) and **Tom Wheeler** (2013-2017).

The bottom line:

Congress should pass legislation to ensure diverse representation in broadcast station ownership, such as the Broadcast VOICES Act and Expanding Broadcast Ownership Opportunities Act.

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