



NABOB

National Association of  
Black Owned Broadcasters

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Media Organizations File Petition Challenging FCC Rules Mandating Foreign Sponsorship ID Disclosures

*-- Lawsuit says order is arbitrary and capricious, fails to address issue of foreign interference in elections --*

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), the Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC) and the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters (NABOB) today [filed a petition](#) for review with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit challenging a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) order mandating disclosures for foreign government-sponsored programming.

In the petition, the organizations argue that the FCC adopted unnecessary and overly burdensome rules that impose on every broadcaster onerous requirements to make specified inquiries of, and conduct independent research on, all the entities with whom broadcasters currently or will in the future have lease agreements. The requirements would be particularly burdensome for smaller broadcasters, including stations owned by women and people of color and new entrants seeking to gain experience through leasing arrangements.

In the FCC order, broadcasters — which collectively have many thousands of contracts for the lease of time to air programming — would need to determine and announce whether the sponsor of programming is a foreign governmental entity or its agent. These determinations would be required even if the leased programming (such as an infomercial or local religious broadcast) poses no colorable risk of foreign sponsorship.

Broadcasters would also need to conduct inquiries and investigations at the time any lease is initially entered into and repeat them every time that same lease (with the same, already-investigated party) is renewed. Stations also must memorialize those inquiries and investigations and maintain that documentation.

The new regulations authorized by the FCC's order are imposed only upon broadcasters, even though the problem that the Commission purports to address — the failure to identify a foreign government entity that is the source of the programming — is almost entirely associated with satellite and cable channels and, above all, with social media and the Internet.

The following statement can be attributed to NAB, MMTC and NABOB:

“NAB, MMTC and NABOB are deeply concerned with the FCC's misguided attempt to develop uniform rules for disclosing foreign government-sponsored programming. The Commission's decision to require broadcasters in all circumstances to investigate the source of leased programming exceeds its statutory authority, is arbitrary and capricious and violates the First Amendment. Broadcasters strongly oppose foreign interference in American elections, but the Commission's order fails to even address this core objective. We look forward to presenting our case in court.”

## **About NAB**

The National Association of Broadcasters is the premier advocacy association for America's broadcasters. NAB advances radio and television interests in legislative, regulatory and public affairs. Through advocacy, education and innovation, NAB enables broadcasters to best serve their communities, strengthen their businesses and seize new opportunities in the digital age. Learn more at [www.nab.org](http://www.nab.org).

## **About MMTC**

The Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC) is a non-partisan, national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving equal opportunity and civil rights in the mass media, telecom and broadband industries, and closing the digital divide. MMTC is generally recognized as the nation's leading advocate for minority advancement in communications. MMTC's vision is to achieve a fully connected, educated, healthy, and empowered society in which all communities thrive. Visit MMTC's website: [www.mmtconline.org](http://www.mmtconline.org).

## **About NABOB**

NABOB is a national not-for-profit trade association dedicated to increasing ownership of broadcast radio and television stations and other media by Black Americans and other people of color. As the voice of the Black broadcast industry, NABOB has been instrumental in shaping national government and industry policies to improve the opportunities for success for Black and all other minority station owners.