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URGENT ACTION ALERT

DATE: October 1, 2008
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau

**Deadline for Filing
Monday, October 6, 2008
11:00 P.M. EST**

NAACP Opposes Proposed Damaging Changes by Arbitron in How They Determine Black and Hispanic Radio Station Ratings **CHANGE WOULD POTENTIALLY DAMAGE AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND HISPANIC RADIO STATIONS IN 8 OF THE NATION'S LARGEST MARKETS**

THE ISSUE:

Arbitron, the company that has a monopoly on providing radio rating services across the Nation, is considering using a new phone-based system for collecting data in 8 of the Nation's largest markets beginning October 8, 2008. If all goes well, a nation-wide expansion of this new methodology is expected to follow. This new proposed methodology has been severely criticized by an independent ratings expert organization as it dramatically undercounts and misrepresents the listening habits of racial and ethnic minorities. As a result, many black- or Hispanic-owned radio stations could suffer a tremendous loss in revenues and eventually be shut down as a result of this proposed change.

Given the importance of radio stations owned and operated by African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities to the survival of our culture and to the promotion of independent thinking, such a move would be devastating.

Since 1951, when the NAACP launched the nation's first campaign against discrimination in broadcasting, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) has recognized the importance of ensuring that a diversity of viewpoints is available over our nation's airwaves. The NAACP has a long history of working with the FCC to achieve this goal through increased minority ownership of radio and employment of minorities by radio stations. Moreover, given the vital role that minority owned radio stations play in their communities, it is imperative that the FCC investigate the accuracy and reliability of this new ratings system to ensure that the public interest is served.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is currently considering launching an investigation into this proposed change, whether or not the new methodology accurately reflects the listening habits of racial and ethnic minorities and the long-term impact this change would have on racial and ethnic minority American owned radio stations across the Nation. The FCC is also accepting public comments on the new methodology and on the proposed study. The deadline to make a comment is this Monday, October 6 2008. The NAACP encourages everyone to contact the FCC and ask that it conduct the study and that Arbitron delay its planned October 8th roll-out of the new methodology until the study has been completed.

[More...](#)

THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:

Contact the Chairman of the FCC and ask that the Commission conduct a study of the proposed Arbitron change in radio rating methodology and that Arbitron not use the new methodology until the study has been completed. To contact the FCC Chairman, you should:

Send an E-Mail

Send an e-mail to the Chairman Kevin Martin of the FCC at:

FCCInfo@FCC.gov

**A SAMPLE
LETTER IS
ATTACHED**

THE MESSAGE

- Given the importance of radio stations owned and operated by African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities to the survival of our culture and to the promotion of independent thinking, we need to ensure that minority owned radio stations are treated fairly and justly compensated survive.
- Arbitron is proposing to use a new methodology to survey radio listenership -- a methodology that has been proven to undercount and misrepresent the listening habits of racial and ethnic minorities. Such a misrepresentation could be devastating to black- and Hispanic-owned radio stations.
- We need to urge the FCC to conduct a study of the accuracy of the new system, especially as it reflects the listening habits of racial and ethnic minorities. Arbitron should not employ its new ratings method until such a study has been completed.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!
If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

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Sample Letter

(date)

Hon. Kevin Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

**RE: MB DOCKET NO. 08-187
ARBITRON'S PROPOSED NEW METHODOLOGY**

Dear Chairman Martin:

As a listener and fan of radio stations owned and operated by racial and ethnic minority Americans, I have some deep concerns about Arbitron's new proposed rating system. Specifically, I understand that the new system, which is scheduled to be rolled out in 8 major media markets in the United States on October 8th, dramatically undercounts and misrepresents the listening habits of racial and ethnic minorities. As a result, many black- or Hispanic-owned radio stations could suffer a tremendous loss in revenues and eventually be shut down as a result of this proposed change. This would be a tragedy, and is in stark opposition to many of the FCC's efforts to expand minority radio ownership. I thus urge the FCC to conduct a study of Arbitron's new proposed methodology to determine if it accurately reflects the listening habits of racial and ethnic minority listeners. I would also hope that Arbitron delay its proposed roll-out until such a study has been completed.

Given the importance of radio stations owned and operated by African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities to the survival of our culture and to the promotion of independent thinking, such a move would be devastating. For at least the last 50 years the FCC has recognized the importance of ensuring that a diversity of viewpoints is available over our nation's airwaves. Moreover, given the vital role that minority owned radio stations play in their communities, it is imperative that the FCC investigate the accuracy and reliability of this new ratings system to ensure that the public interest is served.

I therefore urge you to conduct a thorough study of Arbitron's proposed new methodology and ensure that the survival of our Nation's minority-owned radio stations is not put at unnecessary risk. Please contact me in the near future to let me know what you intend to do and what I can do to help.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and
remember to include your address)

*Remember to contact your
Representative and BOTH
your Senators.*