

May 15, 2009

Dear Senators and Representatives:

We, as leaders representing many diverse religious traditions, urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 1147, the bipartisan Local Community Radio Act of 2009. H.R. 1147, introduced by Representatives Mike Doyle (D – Pa.) and Lee Terry (R – Neb.), and S. 592, introduced by Senators Maria Cantwell (D – Wash.) and John McCain (R – Ariz.), will help increase the number of Low Power FM radio stations in our country.

Low power FM (LPFM) stations are non-commercial stations that operate at 100 watts or less – with a radius of approximately three to five miles. As uniquely local outlets, LPFM stations directly serve their communities. LPFM licenses are granted to churches, high schools, labor unions, non-profits, and civic organizations that understand and serve the needs of their local communities. LPFM stations give local leaders, including politicians, clergy, community elders and young people a uniquely local forum to discuss local issues. Moreover, LPFM stations have a track record of providing essential emergency services during times of crisis. Since its inception in 2000, almost 800 LPFM stations have been authorized around the country. But the FCC requires Congressional action to fully implement the program.

People of faith are well-known for their strong participation in civic society—playing an important role in making our communities stronger and lifting up those who are suffering or who need a little help to succeed. Churches and communities of faith have taken significant advantage of low power radio as part of this mission—approximately half of all low power radio stations are licensed to churches or other houses of worship. In addition to allowing more opportunities for people of faith operate a radio station, low power radio will also add new voices to the radio dial. It will allow for more equitable representation of people of color and women, and at the same time preserve opportunities for everyone—no matter what their views—to be heard.

For this reason, we are calling on Congress to act quickly to authorize the FCC to license more LPFM stations. We respectfully ask you to co-sponsor H.R. 1147 and S. 592, and support its passage through the House Energy & Commerce Committee and the Senate Commerce Committee.

Sincerely,

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