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## Quello: Voice of experience

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Former Federal Communications Commission member and chairman James Quello, who headed the agency in 1993 when the networks regained the right to a financial interest in domestic syndication, has issued a statement reaffirming his belief in such rights and criticizing the effort by independent program producers to secure a 25 percent set-aside in network schedules for their programming.

"What gave my [1993] actions particular significance," Quello said, "was that I had earlier strongly opposed granting the networks syndication rights," when he felt that it would be "too much vertical integration power to [give to] three dominant national program outlets."

What had changed by 1993, he said, was "the tremendous growth of cable, four additional broadcast networks, increased large group ownership and the multiplicity of further oncoming competing program outlets."

Now, he said, with "seven networks, more group broadcasters, hundreds of cable channels, more oncoming satellite channels and Internet outlets ... the independent program producers asking the government to force networks to buy 25 percent of their prime time from them is far more unjustified and untimely. ... Today's multiplicity of program choices provides more than adequate diversification and individual choice."

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