

April 11, 1984

SEPARATE STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JAMES H. QUELLO

Re: Section 73.1910 of the Commission's rules
and regulations concerning the general fairness doctrine
obligations of broadcast licensees, General Docket
No. 84-282.

It is no secret that I have long advocated full First Amendment rights for the electronic media. I strongly endorse the thrust of this document which has many well-reasoned arguments and which should provoke thoughtful comments. This Commission has an obligation to continually reexplore -- for both its own benefit and for the benefit of Congress -- any doctrine that precludes full exercise of journalistic rights by the electronic media. I think this is an extremely important initiative that the Commission has undertaken.

I would like to add that I shall be very interested in reviewing the comments concerning the Commission's statutory authority to revise the fairness doctrine. The Commission has long acquiesced in the view that the 1959 amendments to the Communications Act did effect a codification of the doctrine, and I believe that the burden of proof rests on those who seek to change this status quo. I trust that this issue will be addressed at length in the comments, and I look forward to examining the views of legal scholars on this issue.

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