

December 17, 1986

**PUBLIC STATEMENT OF
FCC COMMISSIONER JAMES H. QUELLO**

Re: Inquiry into the Commission's Comparative Licensing,
Distress Sales and Tax Certificate Policies

I'm not a lawyer but I believe we have broad discretionary authority to regulate broadcasting in the public interest. I believe reasonable minority representation in broadcast ownership in America serves the public interest. Now that a court has questioned our policy, I must critically examine the issues, but reserve final judgment. I really think minorities have arrived in America and I am pleased with the great progress the past 20 years -- they play a vital role in serving their country in the armed forces, elect important officials, receive widespread public acclaim and great wealth for their athletic and creative talents and also for their professional and executive attainments. They play an overall critical role in supporting American democracy. However, they still need added opportunities to own a chunk of the influential communications rock to become fully integrated into society.

Eventually I hope we can arrive at the millennium where all Americans have equal opportunity without special preferences. All of us today favoring minority preferences must face the reality that it is an inherently sensitive issue evoking strong pro and con expression. It tends to breed resentment from other Americans not benefitting from special treatment or not fully appreciating its social value.

However, we have not yet arrived at the millennium. We still have some "catch up" to do. In my opinion, there is still need for added minority incentives like tax certificates, preferences in lotteries and comparative hearings and also in economic aid to stimulate the desired diversity in ownership. As I said before, I simply believe reasonable increased minority representation in communications ownership serves the public interest. I remain committed to the Commission's longstanding goal of encouraging and assisting minority and female entry into broadcasting. I will carefully examine the comments submitted in their inquiry, but I place the burden of proof on those that would challenge the constitutionality of our longstanding Commission policy of minority preferences.