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THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION'S EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY REGULATION—AN AGENCY IN SEARCH OF A STANDARD†

Nolan A. Bowie* and John W. Whitehead**

I. INTRODUCTION

This study was prepared by Citizens Communications Center (CITIZENS), a public interest communications law firm. CITIZENS assists members of the public to improve the service they receive from commercial and non-commercial broadcasters, from cable system operators, and from the government unit regulating the broadcast industry, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

The objective of this study is to examine the performance of the Federal courts and the (Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in monitoring efforts of broadcasters to guarantee equal employment opportunity to all employees and potential employees. The specific focus of the study was to examine the scrutiny and weight given to employment statistics as an indication of effective equal employment practices by the courts and the Commission.

Employment statistics showing the number of minority or female employees at a certain station as compared with those in the population are the most readily available evidence of possible discrimination that can be gathered by local citizens groups. It was of major importance in this study to determine how local concerned citizens have been able to use such statistics in attempting to prove that a broadcaster-employer has discriminated against Blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, Native Americans or women.

In the majority of cases, this issue arises in the context of the required application by each broadcaster, every three years, for renewal of its license to operate on a particular frequency owned by the government, in trust for the people of its community. At that time, the FCC must make an affirmative determination that renewal would serve the public interest of the community of license.

A. *Extent of the Study*

Questions to be answered by the study included:

- 1) How can local citizens challenging a broadcaster's license because of

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alleged discriminatory employment practices move the Commission to designate a hearing or to deny the license renewal application?

2) In broadcast license renewal cases, what are the FCC standards for allowing use of employment statistics to demonstrate that a broadcaster has practiced employment discrimination?

3) What has been the Federal courts' response to those Commission standards?

4) What are the Federal courts' standards for use of employment statistics in non-FCC cases, under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, to demonstrate that an employer has practiced employment discrimination?

5) Are Federal court-developed standards under Title VII and FCC standards under the Communications Act for use of and weight given to employment statistics consistent?

6) How has the FCC internally attempted, in the absence of renewal challenges, to assure that broadcasters comply with its rules prohibiting employment discrimination?

The answers to those questions and others raised by them were found by analyzing (1) Federal laws; (2) FCC rules and regulations; (3) court opinions; (4) FCC opinions and orders; and, (5) FCC internal processing standards.

The first section of this study analyzes: (a) the important cases decided by the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia on appeal from the FCC; (b) FCC cases which have been designated for full evidentiary hearing; (c) FCC cases in which the Commission denied a hearing to petitioning citizens' groups; (d) cases which, in addition to use of employment statistics, contain specific allegations of employment discrimination; (e) cases in which the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is also involved; (f) FCC inquiries, policy statements, and rules and regulations; and, (g) cases in which Federal courts use employment statistics to find a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.*, the primary Federal law prohibiting employment discrimination.

The second section examines the internal performance of the FCC in enforcing its rules and regulations prohibiting employment discrimination. It also provides a limited analysis of the efforts of broadcasters themselves in meeting those rules and regulations. It does so by setting certain minimum standards of performance evidencing renewal of barriers to full utilization of formerly discriminated against groups and determining how many broadcasters fall short.

B. *Summary of Findings*

The authors found that:

1) Commission standards, apparently approved by past decisions of the Court of Appeals, present a major stumbling block to citizens' groups attempting to insure that broadcasters in their communities eliminate discrimination and its past effects;

2) Commission standards are vague, variable, evasive, and easily met, even by broadcasters who actively discriminate against protected minorities and women;

3) Commission standards in allowing statistics to prove or to raise ques-

tions of employment discrimination fall below standards set by Federal courts in Title VII cases;

4) The Commission has failed in its internal monitoring efforts to require that broadcast licensees comply with Federal law and Commission rules prohibiting discrimination;

5) Eight years after the Commission stated its concern that broadcasters practice equal employment opportunity, far too many licensees still fail to employ any minority persons whatsoever, even though they are located in counties or Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) with 5% or greater minority populations.¹ Specifically, based upon employment statistics available in the FCC publication, *Employment in the Broadcasting Industry, 1975*, it was discovered that some 378 broadcasters and group owners having ten or more full time employees, which are located in counties or SMSAs with 5% or greater minority populations, employ absolutely no minority full-time employees. Of this number, 209 employ absolutely no minority persons in any capacity whatsoever.

C. Recommendations

Finally, as a result of what this study reveals, the authors make the following recommendations:

1) Local citizens' groups petitioning to deny renewal applications of broadcast licensees on employment discrimination grounds need much more evidence than mere employment statistics alone if they are to succeed in having the offending licensee designated for a hearing on the renewal of its license. Thus we recommend that the Commission establish a procedure whereby citizens complaining of employment discrimination are able to conduct, to a limited degree, discovery procedures (i.e., serve written interrogatories and take depositions of the station's personnel in order to inquire into such matters as the station's affirmative action plan, job turnover, attrition, firing, testing and application procedures, job descriptions and functions, job supervision and salaries) prior to an FCC decision whether to designate a license renewal for hearing. Such procedures should be triggered where petitioning groups can show statistical evidence of an extremely low rate of minority or female employment vis-a-vis their presence in the community which clearly demonstrates that the percentage of minorities or women employed fall outside any rationally defined "zone of reasonableness." Or alternatively and preferably:

2) The Commission should establish clearly discernible standards of performance in the area of minority and female employment which a broadcaster must meet in order to gain renewal;

3) The Commission should grant full hearings, with their attendant discovery procedures, on petitions to deny license renewal if a petitioner demonstrates that a broadcaster's employment statistics alone fall below a well defined standard;

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1. Because of the limitation of resources, the available data from these stations was analyzed in terms of minority employment only. The number of women employees at these stations are listed in the appendix tables, and in most cases also appear to be substantially below that which would normally be expected from a female work-force assumed if comparable to national figures, to be between 40-50 percent of the total work-force.

4) The Commission should adopt the same standards the Federal courts have established in Title VII cases in interpreting the value and weight to be given to employment statistics;

5) The Commission should refuse to allow a station's employment statistics unilaterally improved after the filing date of the original complaint to have any bearing whatsoever on the question of whether or not a broadcaster practiced employment discrimination before the date the complaint was filed;

6) If the complaining local citizens are able to reach an agreement with the broadcaster resolving the employment issue to the satisfaction of both the community representatives and the Commission (through, e.g., goals and timetables for future employment and other affirmative action efforts) the Commission should consider such an agreement in the manner of a consent order in federal court practice, and renew the license only upon specific condition that the agreement be adhered to;

7) The Commission should supplement the role of local citizens in monitoring broadcasters' employment records by actively questioning and imposing sanctions against broadcasters with unsatisfactory minority and female employment statistics, even in the absence of a citizen petition;

8) The Commission itself should publish and make available to the public lists of suspect stations, including those receiving letters of inquiry instigated upon the Commission's own motion;

9) The Commission should deny the license renewal applications of those stations which persist in violating its equal employment opportunity rules and policies, even in the absence of a citizen petition to deny.

II. COURT DECISIONS INTERPRETING THE FCC'S USE OF EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS IN RENEWAL PROCEEDINGS.

A. *The Elusive "Zone of Reasonableness"*

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit is the court to which a direct appeal from an FCC licensing decision lies.² It has delivered two decisions in cases dealing with the question whether the FCC can deny local citizens hearings and discovery in cases alleging, through petition to deny license renewal, employment discrimination by broadcast stations. Those decisions, *Stone v. FCC*,³ and *Bilingual Bicultural Coalition of Mass Media, Inc. v. FCC*,⁴ permit the Commission to apply a vague and permissive "zone of reasonableness" standard to a broadcaster's minority and female employment practices.

The court in *Stone* first put its stamp of approval on FCC acceptance of a broadcaster's minority and female employment statistics which are somewhere in that "zone of reasonableness,"⁵ at least if there is some indication by the broadcaster of "recruitment of minority group members" or women.⁶ But the application of this standard by the FCC has left many citizens with the puzzled

2. 47 U.S.C. § 402 (1970).

3. 466 F.2d 316 (D.C. Cir. 1972).

4. 492 F.2d 656 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

5. 466 F.2d at 332.

6. *Id.* at 330 (through affidavits filed by licensee).

question: "What does it mean?" The FCC has yet to give the standard any real definition.

Just last year, the Commission in fact admitted that its own standards in the employment area were a problem. In a new rule, attempting to revise its equal employment rules, it stated:

We cannot afford, however, to prolong the current confusion in the industry or to exacerbate the frustrations felt by many women and minority groups. . . . [P]ast failures of compliance may be partly the fault of the Commission by not completely clarifying its intent. . . .⁷

The truly acute lack of a easily discernible standard by which to test the minority and female employment practices of a broadcaster is very clearly acknowledged by FCC Commissioner James H. Quello, himself a former broadcaster, in a concurring statement to the same rule making:

I would hope that this Commission will, at the earliest possible moment, develop and enunciate a recognizable 'zone of reasonableness' standard which will spell out as clearly and straightforwardly as possible exactly what we expect of licensees in this area. Any internal standard developed within this Commission for processing equal employment opportunity matters should also be widely known and understood by the public at large and by the industry concerned. I fail to understand where any constructive purpose is served by continuing to apply some sort of amorphous rule of thumb to these matters.⁸

Thus, in 1976, eight years after the FCC, at the prodding of the Department of Justice, first made its commitment to enforce equal employment opportunity and end employment discrimination on the part of its broadcast licensees,⁹ the broadcast industry and the public still do not know exactly what standards are required of a broadcaster concerning its minority and female employment practices. Certainly no one in the broadcast industry nor in the communications bar or at the FCC itself can point to specific standards.

The most logical approach to determining what has happened to the standard articulated by the Court of Appeals in *Stone* and subsequently applied by the Commission is to examine both the court cases and those resolved by the Commission itself with or without a renewal hearing.

B. *The Search for a Comparative Statistical Base*

The standard sought is one that uses employment statistics to give a threshold answer to the question whether renewal serves the public interest. The statistics cited by local citizens seeking to have renewal denied are: (1) employment of minority groups or women as a percentage of the station's work force, both totally and within certain job categories, as compared to (2) the representation of the minority groups and/or women as a percentage of the population (or work force) of the SMSA surrounding the city of license.

The station employment statistics are available to citizens on each station's Annual Employment Report (FCC Form 395) which is filed with the FCC and kept in each station's public access file.¹⁰ The most recent Census figures (1970) have normally been used for comparison, despite the fact that the number of

7. Nondiscrimination of Licensees Employment Practices, 54 F.C.C.2d 354, 357 (1975).

8. *Id.* at 374.

9. Nondiscrimination Employment Practices of Broadcast Licences, 13 F.C.C.2d 766 (1968).

10. See note 54, *infra*.

minorities have increased substantially in many urban areas since that date. More recently, the FCC has been turning to more specific work force tabulations (often more recent as well) for comparison. That the broader SMSA rather than just the city of license is to be used as the comparative base has been established by *Stone*, *supra*, and reaffirmed by more recent Commission rulings:

The Commission believes that statistical comparisons involving broadcast stations serving metropolitan areas would more accurately reflect reality if comparisons were made to Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs), where possible, rather than to statistics for the actual city of license. Particularly with respect to broadcast employment, it is noted that the pool of prospective employees in a geographic metropolitan area must realistically be considered as including residents of all communities within the area.¹¹

A contingency is provided for non-SMSA communities: "Where a station is not in a SMSA, city or county figures will suffice. The publications 'General Population Characteristics' and 'General Social and Economic Characteristics' should provide the required information."¹²

C. *Stone v. FCC (1972)*

Stone, as previously noted, is the landmark case establishing the so called "zone of reasonableness" standard.

The appellants in *Stone* were a group of Washington, D.C. citizens challenging the license of WMAL-TV in that city. Their petition asked the FCC to deny the license on five grounds, among them that the licensee's ascertainment, programming and employment practices discriminated against the substantial Black community in the city of license. The renewal of the WMAL-TV license was delayed until the Commission determined, after considering the petition's allegations, whether or not to hold a hearing on the renewal application. It eventually decided not to hold the hearing. This was the decision appealed to the D.C. Circuit.

In order to set a license for a renewal hearing on the basis of a petition to deny the Communications Act requires that there be "substantial and material questions of fact" unresolved as to whether renewal should be granted.¹³ The petition must "contain specific allegations of fact sufficient to show. . . that a grant of the application would be *prima facie* inconsistent with the [public interest]." Where the FCC finds there are no substantial and material questions of fact and that the grant of the application would serve the public interest, no hearing need be held.¹⁴

In *Stone*, the FCC decided against the petitioners on the employment ground because it decided that the undisputed statistics presented no substantial question of fact and "the plaintiffs had not made a *prima facie* showing of discriminatory practices on the part of the licensee."¹⁵

11. In the Matter of Letter to Rev. Everett C. Parker, Director Office of Communication, United Church of Christ Concerning 1972 Massachusetts Television Station License Renewals, 44 F.C.C.2d 647, 652 (1974); see also 1972 License Renewal Applications for 28 Broadcast Facilities Licensed to the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Area, 53 F.C.C.2d 104, 113 (1975) and WHEC, Inc., 52 F.C.C.2d 1079, 1088 (1975).

12. Nondiscrimination of Licensees Employment Practices, *supra* note 7, at 360 n.2.

13. 47 U.S.C. § 309(d) (1970).

14. *Stone v. FCC*, 466 F.2d at 322-23.

15. *Id.* at 321.

The court held that whether or not the statistics alone would make a *prima facie* case for refusing to renew the license and mandated a hearing, the allegation of discrimination was sufficiently rebutted¹⁶ because the licensee had submitted affidavits "regarding recruitment of minority group members and their placement in a variety of positions."

The court did however recognize that Commission rules prohibit discrimination in employment,¹⁷ but they cited and approved an earlier FCC decision, *WTAR Radio-TV Corp.*,¹⁸ holding that: "Simply indicating the number of blacks employed by the licensee, without citing instances of discrimination or describing a conscious policy of exclusion, is not sufficient to require an evidentiary exploration." The petitioners in *Stone* had not submitted any affidavits alleging specific instances of discrimination. They used statistics exclusively. Thus, in essence, a hearing on the employment question in *Stone* was denied, despite submission of employment statistics, on the basis that (1) no affidavits were submitted by the petitioner, and (2) the licensee rebutted the allegations of discrimination with its affidavits as to minority recruitment efforts.

The appellants then petitioned for rehearing. One of their primary issues was the Court's rejection of their statistical *prima facie* showing of employment discrimination by the licensee.¹⁹ In denying the petition, the court modified its position slightly, kept open the possibility that statistics alone *could* be used in a future case to establish a *prima facie* case of employment discrimination, established the SMSA comparison standard in broadcast license questions, and gave the initial statistical parameters of what constitutes the "zone of reasonableness":

Finally, our opinion does not hold that statistical evidence of an extremely low rate of minority employment will never constitute a *prima facie* showing of discrimination, or 'pattern of substantial failure to accord equal employment opportunities.' Petitioner's evidence was not an adequate showing in this case because their assertion that WMAL's record stood at 7% Black employment in an area 70% Black was somewhat misleading. In evidence before the FCC was data that approximately 24% of the entire Washington, D.C. metropolitan area is Black. WMAL's employment of approximately 7% Blacks out of this total metropolitan area is within the zone of reasonableness.²⁰

Stone would appear to say that, at least as of 1972, 7% Black employment in a metropolitan area 24% Black (or a three to one ratio) was acceptable. Also note that an affirmative action program to recruit minority employees was considered important in rebutting statistical evidence of employment discrimination²¹ and that there were no specific allegations of employment discrimination. These distinctions also appear in later cases.

D. *Bilingual Bicultural Coalition of Mass Media v. FCC (1974)*

The District of Columbia Court of Appeals considered the same question again in 1974. In *Bilingual Bicultural Coalition of Mass Media v. FCC, supra*, a

16. *Id.* at 330.

17. 47 C.F.R. § 73.680(a). See also 47 C.F.R. §§ 73.125(a), 73.301(a), 73.599(a), and 73.792(a).

18. 19 P. & F. Radio Reg. 661 686 (1970).

19. 466 F.2d at 332.

20. 466 F.2d at 332.

21. Ironically, by the time the case was argued before the Court of Appeals, WMAL-TV's employment of Blacks, spurred by the petition, had in fact tripled to close to 21%. The seven percent figure actually related to its 1969 performance, and the affirmative action program had born fruit.

San Antonio, Texas citizens group filed a petition to deny the renewal application of WOAI-TV, based primarily on statistics showing poor minority employment. Like the petitioners in *Stone*, they failed to submit affidavits alleging any specific instances of employment discrimination. They also chose to rely solely on statistics showing that 48% of the San Antonio population was Mexican American, but that only 12% of the licensee's employees were Mexican American.²² WOAI-TV submitted an affidavit alleging that it had "an extensive recruitment and placement program" for Mexican Americans.²³ The FCC again, as in *Stone*, denied a hearing, determining that the Coalition had failed to raise substantial and material questions of fact that if proven would call for denial of renewal.²⁴

On appeal, the court found that the Coalition's only meritorious contention was that based on employment statistics. However, while not mentioning the term "zone of reasonableness," the court did note, in apparent approval, that the statistical disparity (four to one) between the minority representation in station employment and in the San Antonio population "is quite similar to that in *Stone*."²⁵ The court also noted WOAI-TV's recruitment program, and affirmed the FCC denial of a full evidentiary hearing. The court echoed the language of the earlier *Stone* decision: "[A] disparity that is reasonable in light of a recruitment policy might not be reasonable in its absence."²⁶

In *Bilingual* the court went beyond *Stone* in recognizing the problem petitioning groups, which normally have available only the raw statistics evidencing discriminatory patterns, have in showing specific instances of employment discrimination in order to meet the FCC's standard to obtain a hearing.²⁷ The only way for the petitioners to get that more specific evidence of discrimination is through the familiar tools of discovery available in Federal district courts—interrogatories, depositions, subpoenas. But they only can get access to such discovery tools in FCC proceedings when the hearing is designated. This is totally at variance with Federal court practice, where discovery is available when a complaint is initiated, assuming that it meets minimal jurisdictional requirements. Thus the evidence of discrimination—detailed application, hiring, promotion, training, firing and similar data available only to the licensee—would remain locked in its possession without a hearing. And unless the petitioners could show more than a low overall statistical profile, they could not obtain this data. Clearly complaining local citizens were caught in a "Catch-22" situation.

The court in 1974 made it clear that it was not satisfied with the *status quo* on this problem. It encouraged the Commission to provide better methods of dealing with *bona fide* allegations of employment discrimination. The court suggested that the Commission itself might scrutinize employment practices more closely when there is a statistical disparity.²⁸ And if the problem continued to

22. *Bilingual Bicultural Coalition of Mass Media, Inc. v. FCC*, 492 F.2d at 657.

23. *Id.* at 659.

24. *Id.* at 658.

25. *Id.* at 659.

26. *Id.* at 658.

27. *Id.* at 659.

28. *Id.* at 658. The FCC in 1972 had started directing letters of inquiry to stations with ten or more employees, asking for more information on the employment practices if 1) there was a *decline* in employment of women from one year to the next or there were *no* women employed; or if 2) the stations served SMSA's with five percent or more of a minority population and there was a *decline* in the employment of the minority from one year to the next or there were *no* members of the minorities employed. *Equal Employment Opportunity Inquiry*, 36 F.C.C.2d 515 (1972). But there was clearly an

close the door of the Commission to local citizens, the Court implied a threat of further action: "But if minorities are not given some means for developing statistical disparities, hearings may have to be required based on such disparities alone, in order to provide the tools of discovery."²⁹

Thus from *Bilingual* we note: (1) minority employment by a station in a ratio of one to four to the minority representation in the population seems to have been within the "zone of reasonableness" as of the time period reviewed by the Court, (2) the presence of an active minority recruitment program is again very important, and (3) the absence of a specific allegation of employment discrimination was relevant.

E. *Columbus Broadcasting Coalition v. FCC (1974)*

Later in 1974, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals decided a third case dealing in part with a broadcaster's minority employment practices. A Columbus, Ohio citizens group had challenged the license renewal applications of WBNS-AM-FM-TV. The appeal of the FCC's denial of a hearing on their petition, *Columbus Broadcasting Coalition v. FCC*,³⁰ established no more substantive law in the area, but is useful for determining what is important in the examination of employment practices at license renewal.

The court accepted the FCC finding that: the composition of the WBNS stations' minority staff falls within a range of reasonableness when compared to the percentage of minorities in the stations' service areas.³¹ The Black employment at the WBNS stations in 1970, before the petition to deny, was 8.3% of the work force. The Black representation in the SMSA was 11.6%. The court did note that in 1971 and 1972, after the petition to deny had been filed, the Black work force representation increased to 9.5% and 10%. But it did not say that such post-term upgrading was important in the decision.³²

The petitioner presented a few specific allegations as to discrimination against particular applicants or employees. The court, however, found that these had been "more than met by the strong evidence of a very positive, result producing, minority recruitment program" which had been submitted by the licensee.³³ Thus, the court approved the Commission decision not to hold a hearing, and affirmed the FCC decision on the employment question, as well as the other issues.³⁴

The broadcaster's overall employment statistics were not unreasonable in this case. Despite the fact that the Coalition had gone beyond statistics to raise specific allegations, however, no hearing was mandated. The WBNS affirmative action program was crucial. The employment statistics showed the station moving toward parity with the SMSA Black population even prior to the filing of the petition to deny.

unsophisticated tool for reaching into discriminatory licensee practices, with vices of both over and under-inclusion.

29. 492 F.2d at 659.

30. 505 F.2d 320 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

31. *RadiOhio, Inc.*, 38 F.C.C.2d 721, 746 (1973).

32. 505 F.2d at 329.

33. *Id.* at 329.

34. *Id.* at 330.

III. THE FCC'S PRACTICE IN DEALING WITH EMPLOYMENT ALLEGATIONS BEFORE AND SINCE THE COURT DECISIONS

A. *Petitions to Deny Designated for Full Hearing*

Since their standing was recognized in 1966 in the seminal *Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ v. FCC* case³⁵ many groups of local citizens have filed petitions to deny license renewal alleging employment discrimination. By early 1976, only four renewal applications challenged on employment discrimination grounds have been designated for hearing.³⁶ Two full hearings have been held and FCC decisions rendered.³⁷ Each of these cases should be examined to determine what evidentiary threshold local citizens must reach in an employment discrimination case to have the Commission recognize that there is a "substantial and material question of fact" establishing a *prima facie* case that the renewal would not be in the public interest.

1. *Alabama Educational Television Commission (AETC)*

The first case to go to hearing involved renewal of the licenses for the eight Alabama Educational Television Commission stations, and an application for a construction permit for one new station. The complaint was brought in 1970 and designated for hearing in 1972. At the time the complaint was brought, AETC employed only one full-time Black employee out of a substantial staff in a state 30% Black, a clear benchmark for what is *outside* the "zone of reasonableness" at least for hearing designation. The final decision was rendered in 1975 by the full Commission after the challengers appealed the Administrative Law Judge's decision to renew. The Commission, in *Alabama Educational Television Commission*³⁸ overruled the Administrative Law Judge and denied the applications. The hearing was designated on both programming and employment questions, and the final decision relied exclusively on discriminatory programming findings to deny renewal.

The critical factor in the FCC decision on employment was that not until eight months before the expiration of the AETC license terms in 1970 were Commission rules promulgated rules prohibiting employment discrimination.³⁹ Because of this the Commission examined AETC's employment efforts "at all times, including after the expiration of the license term."⁴⁰ The Commission refused to rely solely on the statistical data for the 1967-70 license period submitted by the petitioners because of the lack of specific FCC EEO rules until the last year of this term. It also found that a "small staff was employed" and there were no specific allegations of employment discrimination.⁴¹ The opinion does not specifically state whether or not AETC's post-license term Black employment was within the "zone of reasonableness." It did, however, note both a substantial improvement in Black employment as reflecting AETC's affirmative recruiting efforts, and the initiation of a training program.⁴²

35. 359 F.2d 994 (D.C. Cir. 1966).

36. *New Mexico Broadcasting Co.*, 54 F.C.C.2d 126 (1975); *Rust Communication Group, Inc.*, 53 F.C.C. 355 (1975); *Leflore Broadcasting Co.*, 46 F.C.C.2d 980 (1974); *Alabama Educational Television Comm'n*, 33 F.C.C.2d 495, 513 (1972).

37. *Leflore and AETC*.

38. 50 F.C.C.2d 240 (1969).

39. *Nondiscrimination Employment Practices of Broadcast Licensees*, 18 F.C.C.2d 240 (1969).

40. *Alabama Educ. Television Comm'n*, 50 F.C.C.2d 461, 474 (1975).

41. *Id.* at 474.

42. *Id.* at 474-75.

This case, because of its peculiar fact situation, is of little value in determining when minority employment statistics are currently suspect. All broadcast licensee's have now operated under specific FCC EEO rules for seven years. Thus the Commission's great weight, given to evidence of post-term upgrading in minority employment statistics, an affirmative action program, and the lack of allegations of specific evidence of employment discrimination during the license term is not necessarily precedent for other cases.

2. *Leflore Broadcasting (WSWG, Greenwood, Mississippi)*

The second hearing decision, *Leflore Broadcasting Company, Inc.*,⁴³ denied the 1972 and 1973 Renewal Applications of WSWG-AM and FM in Greenwood, Mississippi, on the basis of petitions to deny filed by the Greenwood Movement, a local civil rights organization, and various local residents.

The employment question in this case was not based on allegations of a statistical employment pattern evidencing discrimination, but rather on allegations of violations of specific FCC rules regarding discriminatory employment practices, which both the Commission and the courts consider very important. Section 73.680(a) of the FCC Rules, provides:

Equal opportunity in employment shall be afforded by all licensees or permittees of commercially or noncommercially operated standard, FM, television or international broadcast stations (as defined in this part) to all qualified persons, and no person shall be discriminated against in employment because of race, color, religion, national origin or sex.⁴⁴

The obvious source for the above, Section 703(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, provides:

It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer—

(1) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.⁴⁵

The Commission Rules Sections 73.125 (applying to AM) and 73.301 (applying to FM) are identical and follow the Commission's general policy announced in Section 73.680. The commonly owned licensees in *Leflore* were found to be in violation of Sections 73.125 and 73.301 because of specific acts of employment discrimination against three employees: The licensee discharged three Black announcers when its format was changed from rhythm and blues to country and western without giving the announcers an opportunity to prove they could work in that format.⁴⁶ The Administrative Law Judge found that the licensee's termination of the three Blacks was not based on their job performance, but rather on an assumption by the licensee that they could not, by reason of their race, handle the new format. *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.*,⁴⁷ was cited to show that

43. 46 F.C.C.2d 980 (1974).

44. 47 C.F.R. § 73.680(a) (—).

45. 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2(a) (1970).

46. FCC No. 75D-45 at ¶ 65.

47. 401 U.S. 424 (1971).

such classification of job capacity by race is prohibited by the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Again, statistics and the "zone of reasonableness" were not addressed in this decision. However the decision is important for the fact that the Judge pierced through the licensee's compliance on paper with having an affirmative action recruitment program as required by FCC Rules. The Judge held that in this case having such a program was mere "window dressing" and held: "(M)eeting such requirements, while at the same time engaging in discriminatory practices, makes an equal opportunity in employment program, of which affirmative action is an integral component, completely meaningless."⁴⁸

3. [Rust Communications Group (WHAM, Rochester, N.Y.)

On May 22, 1975 the license renewal applications of WHAM-AM and FM, Rochester, New York were designated for hearing.⁴⁹ In *Rust*, two citizens groups had filed petitions to deny the renewal in 1972, based in part on discrimination in employment practices.⁵⁰ The application was also designated on issues relating to inadequate ascertainment of the needs of the local minority population and inadequate programming to meet those needs.

Rust's statistical performance was extremely poor. The Rochester SMSA was 6.5% Black, but in 1971, out of 39 full-time employees, Rust employed only one Black person as a janitor. In 1972, 1973, and 1974, no minorities were employed.⁵¹ This, the Commission found, was not satisfactory: "Clearly the licensee's employment profile showing no full-time Black employees is outside the zone of reasonableness."⁵²

Furthermore, it found that Rust's affirmative action program, required by Sections 73.125 and 73.301 of the Commission's Rules, was inadequate:

In cases where employment profiles fall outside a "zone of reasonableness," the licensee must modify or supplement its recruitment practices and policies by vigorous and systematic efforts to locate and encourage the candidacy of qualified minorities.⁵³

Rust failed to do this.

Compounding Rust's problems was an unresolved specific allegation of employment discrimination. And further attention was focused on Rust's employment statistics showing females constituted only 3.5% of the staff and only 3.1% of the employees in the "upper four"⁵⁴ category jobs. Both minority and female employment issues were set for hearing. The statistics outside the "zone of reasonableness" and the apparent failure of the affirmative action program led the

48. FCC No. 75D-45 at ¶ 65.

49. *Rust Communications Group, Inc.*, 53 F.C.C.2d 355, 364 (1975).

50. *Id.* at 361-64.

51. *Id.* at 362-63.

52. *Id.* at 363.

53.

54. The Commission in 1970 adopted a rule requiring licensees with five or more full-time employees to file an annual employment report (FCC Form 395) with a statistical breakdown of minority in nine job categories. *Nondiscrimination in Employment Practices of Broadcast Licensees*, 23 F.C.C. 430 (1970). The report form also breaks down employment by sex. The Commission's interest in statistical evidence of employment discrimination focuses both on 1) the total number of women or minorities employed at a station and 2) the number of women or minorities employed in higher paying more desirable "upper four" job categories (Officials and Managers, Professionals, Technicians, and Sales Workers).

Commission to "believe that a *prima facie* case of employment discrimination has been established."⁵⁵

The decision did note that fully proportional employment of minority group members (parity with the SMSA) is not currently required. But the poor statistics here focused attention on what was found to be on its face an unsuccessful affirmative action program. This case does give one of the few clear FCC definitions of what is beyond the "zone of reasonableness": No Black employees in an SMSA 6.5% Black. The Commission also in this case looked at employment statistics from years beyond the expired license term, though here to the detriment of the licensee, since they illustrated the continuing failure of WHAM's affirmative action program. Even here, however, examination of post-license term employment statistics sets a dangerous precedent. A licensee should be made to "run on his record"⁵⁶ in employment as well as programming.

4. *New Mexico Broadcasting Co. (KGGM-TV, Albuquerque, New Mexico)*

Later in 1975, the 1971 renewal application of KGGM-TV, Albuquerque was designated for hearing in *New Mexico Broadcasting Co., Inc.*⁵⁷ a petition to deny had been filed by a local Coalition of Mexican American groups. The petitioners alleged inadequate past employment practices, as well as community ascertainment and past and proposed programming deficiencies.⁵⁸ The Commission stressed the past programming issue, which alone required "further exploration at an evidentiary hearing."⁵⁹ It said that the employment question raised by petitioners would ordinarily have been grounds only for further administrative inquiry, not a full renewal hearing.⁶⁰ But the Commission was "influenced in our decision [to set the employment questions for hearing] by the fact that we have already determined that substantial questions regarding the responsiveness of KGGM-TV's past programming have been raised which clearly warrant a full evidentiary hearing."⁶¹

One specific instance of employment discrimination was alleged, but the Commission found that it did not raise a sufficient question of fact to warrant further investigation. The statistical disparity between Mexican American representation in the KGGM-TV work force (approximately 18%) and Mexican American representation in the Albuquerque SMSA (39.2%) was "apparently within a 'zone of reasonableness' for the license period in question."⁶² Again, however, the FCC's examination of the station's post-license term employment statistics showed that there had been "no readily apparent increase or improvement."⁶³ Between 1973 and 1974 there was a "decrease in the percentage

55. 53 F.C.C.2d at 363-64.

56. See *Office of Communication of United Church of Christ v. FCC*, 359 F.2d 994, 1007 (D.C. Cir. 1966); *Alabama Educational Television Comm'n*, 50 F.C.C. at 476.

57. 54 F.C.C.2d 126 (1975).

58. *Id.* at 126-27.

59. *Id.* at 134.

60. Normally further inquiry would only be a request to the licensee to submit additional information to the Commission on affirmative action programs and hiring practices at the station. The license renewal is deferred until receipt of the requested data, then summarily renewed. See *1972 License Renewal Applications for 28 Broadcast Facilities Licensed to the Philadelphia, Pa. Area*, 53 F.C.C.2d 104 (1975); *Inquiry into the Employment Policies and Practices of Certain Broadcast Stations Licensed to Florida*, 44 F.C.C. 735 (1974).

61. 54 F.C.C.2d at 139.

62. *Id.* at 138.

63. *Id.* at 139.

of Mexican American employees."⁶⁴ Thus a look at post-license term factors actually *benefitted* the petitioning local group, and the employment question was, as in the case of *WHAM, Rochester*, also based on the failure of the required affirmative action program to achieve results.

5. *Summary of Factors Leading To Hearing Designation*

In none of these four preceding cases was employment the sole issue designated for hearing, nor were employment statistics alone the overtly stated basis of designation for hearing or a decision denying renewal. In the *Rochester* case⁶⁵ the employment statistics were held beyond the "zone of reasonableness." However the FCC still did not hold that the petitioners established a *prima facie* case of employment discrimination for the Commission on the statistics alone. The apparent failure of the affirmative action program was also essential to the decision to designate for hearing. Nevertheless, in this, and the Albuquerque case, the finding on the affirmative action program was in essence a product of statistics—the statistics showed a lack of results, therefore the program was a failure.

Nevertheless, the Commission still has no definitive standard to determine when employment statistics are unacceptable, and how the definition of the acceptable "zone of reasonableness" changes over time. Zero Black employment in the 6.5% Black population within the Rochester SMSA had to be suspect, but 18% Mexican American employment in the 39.2% Mexican American population within the Albuquerque SMSA was acceptable at least as of one point in time, but not if it continued or decreased. The FCC has not been willing to affirmatively recognize, except in the extreme case, that a disparity in employment statistics as against SMSA statistics does in fact establish under law a *prima facie* case of discrimination warranting a hearing and, if not disproved, grounds for denial of license.

The Commission however recognizes that, in some instances, statistics showing a disparity in minority employment do at least raise a serious question as to the future ability of the broadcaster to serve the public interest, causing it, as will be seen below, to pursue various other attempted remedies short of renewal hearing. The Court of Appeals' earlier findings that disparities of 7% to 24% (three to one) and 12% to 48% (four to one) were within the zone of reasonableness, have been used by the FCC to accept almost any statistical profile above zero minority employment as reasonable, at least if there has been upgrading after a petition to deny is filed.

A crucial stumbling block in establishing a standard of reasonableness is that parity has not yet been defined as the required goal. The Court of Appeals⁶⁶ and the Commission⁶⁷ make it clear that Commission policy does not require employment of minority groups or women which is fully proportional to their representation in the SMSA. A statistical disparity though, if beyond the "zone of reasonableness" will focus attention on the licensee's affirmative action program,

64. *Id.*

65. *Rust Communications Group, Inc.*, 53 F.C.C.2d 355.

66. 505 F.2d at 329.

67. *New Mexico Broadcasting Co.*, 54 F.C.C. 138; *Rust Communications Group, Inc.* 53 F.C.C.2d at 362; *National Broadcasting Co.*, 52 F.C.C.2d at 293-94; *Westinghouse Broadcasting Co.*, 48 F.C.C.2d 1123, 1134 (1974); *Nondiscrimination Employment Practices of Broadcast Licensees*, 23 F.C.C. 430, 431 (1970).

which must be modified or supplemented to employ minorities. It must have resulted in improvement in minority employment statistics over a specified time, as evidenced by increasing minority employment *after* the licensee's expired term. While the presumed goal is roughly parity, this has not yet been explicitly stated by the Commission, nor the timetables under which this goal must be achieved. The standard is very lax, as will be seen by comparing it with Title VII standards and EEOC practice.

*B. Cases In Which The FCC Has Refused To Hold
A Hearing on EEO Questions*

In numerous other cases besides the four discussed above, and the three on which the Court of Appeals has spoken, the Commission has rejected petitions to deny and refused to set for hearing questions on the broadcaster's minority or female employment practices. Examination of a few of these cases show recurring FCC refusal to take meaningful steps to determine licensee fitness to continue to operate.

1. *WHEC-TV (Rochester, N. Y.)*

A petition to deny was filed against WHEC-TV, Rochester, N. Y., in 1972. "[A]t the time the petition herein was filed," noted the Commission, "the applicant employed no full-time Blacks, and its employment profile was below the zone of reasonableness."⁶⁸ Minority representation in the SMSA was 7%. But the Commission, even without the excuse offered in *AETC*, since this licensee had operated under the FCC's EEO rules for its entire license period, again decided to "consider the licensee's efforts to comply with our equal employment rules even after the petition to deny was filed."⁶⁹ By 1974 the station's staff was 4.6% Black, as opposed to the 6.5% Black population found in *WHAM*, Rochester. The Commission found to be "clearly within the zone of reasonableness."⁷⁰ The Commission said it would have considered a short-term renewal, but due to the FCC's three-year delay in decision, the term just renewed was due to expire in less than a month. Commissioner Hooks' dissent took exception to the use of post-license term statistics when the Commission's decision on renewal was designed to study strictly performance during the license term.⁷¹

2. *WTVR-AM-FM-TV (Richmond, VA.)*

Petitions to deny were filed in 1972 by the Richmond Black Broadcasting Coalition against the licensee of WTVR-AM-FM-TV, Richmond, Virginia.⁷² These petitions based their employment grounds for denial primarily on statistics, but there were specific allegations as to instances of employment discrimination and an ineffective affirmative action program. The Commission found the licensee's EEO program satisfactory and its employment profiles within the "zone of reasonableness."⁷³ The Richmond SMSA population was 26.2% Black, with a work force 24.2% Black. In 1972, the last year of the license term, Black

68. *WHEC, Inc.*, 52 F.C.C.2d 1079, 1088 (1972).

69. *Id.* at 1089.

70. *Id.*

71. *Id.* at 1091.

72. *Roy H. Park Broadcasting of Virginia, Inc.*, 54 F.C.C.2d 995 (1975).

73. *Id.* at 1000.

employment at the TV station was only 1.5% due to the employment of one Black person in a part-time capacity; at the AM-FM combination it was zero.⁷⁴

The Commission clearly had to examine post-license term statistics to reach its conclusion that the minority employment profile was within the "zone of reasonableness." While the Commission did not specifically mention the goals for such an examination, it listed 1975 minority employment as 13.7% at the TV station and 9.5% at the AM-FM stations. Thus, the Commission again used post-term employment statistics for the dual purpose of (1) putting the stations within the zone of reasonableness and (2) approving its affirmative action program.

This opinion indicates that the Commission examines more than just the total minority employment at a station, but also the minority employment in those four job categories which are more desirable and lucrative. A table is printed in the opinion which shows both WTVR employment statistics in all FCC Form 395 job categories, and in the upper four job categories.⁷⁵

The Commission used a device becoming increasingly common to avoid a renewal hearing. It required additional future reporting on minority employment practices,⁷⁶ as to new hiring and other affirmation action efforts, for the AM-FM combination because its improvement in statistics "from 1973 to 1975 is the result of a reduction in staff and not an increase in minority employees."⁷⁷ The WTVR decision is being appealed.⁷⁸

3. *WLTH (Gary, Indiana)*

In *Northwestern Indiana Broadcasting Corporation*,⁷⁹ the Commission designated for hearing, based on a petition filed by the Gary Human Relations Commission, the 1973 renewal application of radio station WLTH, Gary, Indiana. The employment charges, however, were not a ground for the designation. The petitioner had questioned WLTH's employment statistics, but they were found to be within the "zone of reasonableness."

The SMSA for Gary is 23.9% minority. WLTH's minority employment in 1973, the year of license expiration, was 21%. In 1974 and 1975, after the license term, it was 24% and 18%.⁸⁰ The Commission made no mention that it was considering post-license term statistics, nor did it mention the 6% drop in WLTH's minority employment from 1974 to 1975.

4. *KITE (San Antonio, Texas)*

A petition to deny the 1974 license renewal application of radio station KITE, San Antonio, was filed by the same Bilingual Bicultural Coalition on Mass Media as in the 1974 Court of Appeals case discussed above.⁸¹ The petition was denied on all grounds and the license was renewed. Not only was KITE's affirmative action program found to be successful, but employment figures were found within the "zone of reasonableness" for both Mexican Americans and for women.

74. *Id.* at 999.

75. *See* note 54, *supra*.

76. *See* note 60, *supra*.

77. *Roy H. Park Broadcasting of Virginia, Inc.*, 54 F.C.C.2d 995, 1000 (1975).

78. *Sub nom. Black Broadcasting Coalition of Richmond v. FCC* (D.C. Cir. No. 75-1885).

79. 57 F.C.C.2d 686 (1976), Docket No. 20604 (FCC No. 75-1085, October 7, 1975).

80. *Slip Opinion*, FCC No. 75-1085, slip op. at 14-15.

81. *Doubleday Broadcasting Company, Inc.*, 56 F.C.C.2d 333 (1975).

The San Antonio SMSA work force was 41.7% Mexican American. Mexican Americans represented in 1974 (the last year of the license term) 19.2% of the KITE work force and 14.3% of the employees in the upper four job categories. In 1975 the KITE statistics improved to 25.0% and 21.1%.

The SMSA work force was 39.6% women. Women represented 26.9% of the 1974 KITE work force but only 9.5% of the employees in the upper four job categories. In 1975 the comparative statistics were 29.1% and 10.5%.⁸² These were all held to be within the very flexible "zone of reasonableness."

The Commission again examined representation in the upper four job categories. Yet it found a three to one disparity in terms of Mexican American employment in these categories, and a four to one disparity as to women, still in the safe "zone" as late as 1974. While this figure had increased substantially for Mexican Americans by 1974, no similar increase was shown for women. Still the license was renewed. Use of post-term employment statistics, which on its face should have called for a hearing on at least female employment if the Rochester and Albuquerque precedents were followed, did not achieve this result. This decision is being appealed.

5. *WABC-TV (New York, N.Y.)*

The National Organization for Women (NOW) filed a petition to deny the 1972 renewal application of WABC-TV, New York City.⁸³ The FCC limited its initial examination of the licensee's employment statistics to determine if it was within the "zone" as to the year immediately preceding renewal.⁸⁴ It also analyzed percentages of female employment in the top four job categories as well as overall.

Women comprised 52.6% of the New York SMSA population and 40.3% of the SMSA work force. Within the "zone of reasonableness" was held to mean WABC's representation of women at 23.3% in all job categories, and only 5.7% (about a seven to one disparity) in the upper four job categories.⁸⁵ The Commission also found that the petitioners "failed to demonstrate any specific instances of employment discrimination by WABC-TV."⁸⁶ But the FCC also found that the WABC-TV affirmative action program had been successful, looking to the increase in employment of women in subsequent years.⁸⁷ Thus it did in fact consider post-term upgrading in deciding that no substantial and material question of fact had been raised, that no further inquiry was necessary, and that a hearing was not mandated.⁸⁸

6. *WRC-TV (Washington, D.C.)*

To date, the most crucial example of the divergence between FCC standards and those of the EEOC and Federal courts in judging when statistics alone evidence employment discrimination is a second case based on a petition to deny

82. *Id.* at 341.

83. American Broadcasting Co., Inc., 52 F.C.C.2d 98 (1975).

84. *Id.* at 121.

85. *Id.* at 117, 121.

86. *Id.* at 117, 121.

87. *Id.* at 118, 122.

88. An appeal is currently pending and the EEOC, as in the WRC-TV case discussed *infra*, has filed an *amicus curiae* brief urging that WABC's license should have been designated for hearing on these facts.

filed by NOW. NOW, shortly after its WABC filing, challenged the 1972 renewal application of WRC-TV, Washington, D.C.⁸⁹

On employment issues the Commission had before it both its own FCC Form 395 statistics from WRC-TV and an EEOC finding on a NOW complaint, based on statistics, that there was "reasonable cause" to believe that WRC-TV, in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, had discriminated against women in employment.⁹⁰ The Commission refused to take cognizance of the reasonable cause finding of the EEOC, preferring to defer action on the issues brought in the EEOC case until that agency reached a "final determination."⁹¹ The Commission reserved the right to take further action in light of the ongoing EEOC proceeding and therefore deferred the license renewal application, but refused to set the case for hearing.⁹²

On employment issues not deferred to the EEOC, the FCC decided against the petitioners. A review of WRC's 1971 and 1972 (the last year of the expired license) FCC Forms 395 revealed that 24% and 22.5% of the WRC-TV employees in those years were women, while the Washington, D.C., SMSA work force was 48% female. This was, the FCC held, within "a current zone of reasonableness" for 1971-72.⁹³ In examining the post-license term 1973 and 1974 Annual Employment Reports, increases in total and upper four job category employment for women were noted; thus the FCC found the WRC affirmative action program was "an operating success."⁹⁴

On the other hand, by using statistics not dissimilar to those available to the FCC, the EEOC had concluded that statistics on the WRC work force permitted an inference of a pattern or practice of discrimination against women, violating Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.⁹⁵ Yet the FCC had refused to designate a hearing on the same statistics, despite the EEOC reasonable cause finding.

Thus it is clear that a finding by the EEOC that discriminatory employment practices by a licensee do exist does not, to the FCC, raise "a substantial and material question of fact" whether the licensee is able to serve the public interest, therefore requiring the license renewal to be set for hearing.⁹⁶ This appears inconsistent with Commission rules prohibiting discrimination in employment⁹⁷ and the Commission's statements that discriminatory employment practices are not in the public interest.⁹⁸

The EEOC has filed an *amicus* brief in the pending WRC appeal urging that the FCC should not defer to the EEOC proceedings, but has a statutory duty to conduct its own hearing. The FCC asked for a remand of the order to take another look at WRC's current employment practices, but has issued a new decision again denying a hearing.⁹⁹

89. National Broadcasting Co., Inc., 52 F.C.C.2d 273 (1975).

90. *Id.* at 292.

91. *Id.* at 292.

92. *Id.* at 295.

93. *Id.* at 294.

94. *Id.* at 294-95.

95. 42 U.S.C. § 2000(e) *et seq.* (1976).

96. 47 U.S.C. § 309 (1970).

97. 47 U.S.C. § 73.680(a) (1970).

98. Nondiscrimination in Employment Practices of Broadcast Licensees, 13 F.C.C.2d 766, 769 (1968). See also Nondiscrimination in Employment Practices of Broadcast Licensees, 18 F.C.C.2d 240, (1969).

99. National Broadcasting Co. (FCC 76-135, February 20, 1976).

7. Area-Wide EEO Inquiries

On several occasions, the FCC has examined the equal employment record of all stations in a particular market. This has been done sometimes at its own instance, and at other times on the basis of a market-wide petition filed by citizens groups at renewal. While this has occurred in several other markets (e.g., Richmond, Va.,¹⁰⁰ Washington, D.C.,¹⁰¹ Tulsa, Okla.¹⁰²), this study will examine only two examples in detail—the state of Florida, and the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

a. Florida Inquiry

In *Inquiry Into The Employment Policies and Practices of Certain Broadcast Stations Located in Florida*,¹⁰³ [hereinafter cited as “*Florida Inquiry*”] the Commission acted on its own motion to inquire into employment practices in an entire state. A letter of inquiry was triggered if a station’s annual EEO report showed that it had 11 or more employees and had no minorities or women employed in 1971 or 1972, or had a decline in minority or female employment from 1971 to 1972. The letters requested the station’s to explain why their employment practices were inconsistent with FCC rules prohibiting employment discrimination and requiring an EEO program. The FCC was satisfied with some stations’ responses describing their EEO programs, but the majority were found to be inadequate. However, all the Florida licenses were renewed, including those with inadequate programs subject only to additional periodic reporting as to establishment and success of an affirmative action program.¹⁰⁴

The *Florida Inquiry* decision restates Commission policy on suspect licensee employment practices: As part of a licensee’s affirmative action obligation, particularly in cases where its employment profile falls below a zone of reasonableness, the licensee must modify or supplement its recruitment practices and policies.¹⁰⁵

The Commission limits its role to looking at “highly disproportionate” statistics:

[F]ully proportional employment of minority groups is not called for . . . non-proportionate minority group employment at a station does not necessarily evidence discrimination . . . The same principle applies to the employment of women . . . However, . . . statistics showing highly disproportionate representation of minorities and women employed by a licensee in relation to their presence in the population or work force may constitute evidence of discriminatory practices.¹⁰⁶

And finally:

[W]e have consistently maintained that compliance with our rules and policies cannot be judged alone by whether or not a licensee employs minority and women group individuals, but rather, must be judged by reviewing the station’s employment profile in conjunction with its equal opportunity program, the extent of its adherence to its program, and its reasonable good faith efforts to make its program work.¹⁰⁷

100. 54 F.C.C.2d 953 (1975).

101. 54 F.C.C.2d 599 (1975).

102. 54 F.C.C.2d — (1975).

103. 44 F.C.C.2d 735 (1974).

104. *Id.* at 740.

105. *Id.* at 736.

106. *Id.*

107. *Id.* at 737.

b. Philadelphia Market-Wide Petition

Another Commission inquiry into equal employment practices in an entire market, *1972 License Renewal Applications for 28 Broadcast Facilities Licensed to the Philadelphia, Pa. Area*,¹⁰⁸ was the result not of self-instigated inquiry letters, but rather a market-wide petition to deny the 1972 license renewal applications of 28 Philadelphia radio and television stations based on their EEO statistics. The Commission dealt in one opinion with the entire market, but examined each station individually, within that market, as in *Florida Inquiry*, *supra*. Market-wide discrimination on the part of all 28 stations, the FCC felt, was rebutted by the lack of factual allegations of discrimination against specific individuals in the petition, and a post-license term marketwide statistical improvement.

The FCC admitted in Philadelphia what it has seemed to ignore in other cases, that "reasonableness of station's employment statistics was influenced by the licensee's *past* practices and policies surrounding minority recruitment."¹⁰⁹ This is at least one place where the Commission indicated it realizes that in employment practices as well as programming the broadcaster should "run on his record" during the license term, and not post-license term improvements made without public service intent, but solely to avoid a hearing or loss of license. The Commission also admitted the difference between their lax standards on the value of statistics to show discrimination and the Federal courts' more demanding standard, discussed below, which assumes that without discrimination there should be *no* disparity between the percentages of minorities or women in an employer's work force and their area representation.¹¹⁰

Of the 28 stations' employment profiles examined, seven, or one-fourth of the stations in the market, were found not in compliance with FCC rules because of both large statistical disparities and deficient EEO programs. Their renewal applications were put in deferred status, pending receipt of additional information. The Philadelphia SMSA population is 19.0% minority, and its work force is 18.9% minority. The seven suspect stations' minority employment in 1972 ranged from 0 to 6.9%, and in the upper four job categories from 0 to 7.1%, about a 2.5 to 1 disparity at the upper end. However, the deferrals of renewal were based both on percentages found to be "initially low" and affirmative action programs found to be "generally weak."¹¹¹

The seven stations put on a deferred status were asked to submit more detailed additional reports on their EEO programs than the stations in the *Florida Inquiry*. An eighth station was required to submit the same less detailed additional reports required of the stations in the *Florida Inquiry*, because of a marked decline to zero of minority employment in the upper four job categories and no evidence that the EEO program was active.¹¹² The licenses were ultimately renewed after the reports were received, but future reporting conditions were placed on them as well.

Again the primary statistic that grasped the Commission's attention was

108. 53 F.C.C.2d 104 (1975).

109. *Id.* at 112.

110. *Id.*

111. *Id.* at 115.

112. *Id.* at 117.

zero. It noted that the zero minority employment of Philadelphia's WIOQ-FM in 1974 (two years into the term for which renewal application was being made) was "outside the one-to-four ratio in Bilingual."¹¹³ Approved were several renewals for stations with 1972 statistics well below the 18.9% Philadelphia SMSA minority work force (although the Commission in many cases relied on improvements made by 1974). Minority employment percentages in 1972 and 1974 for stations renewed included: 4.5% for WRCP-AM-FM (improved to 14.3%); 6.6% for WIFI-FM (improved to 17.4%); and 9.3% for WPHL-TV (improved to 19.7%). Yet it inexplicably renewed WIP-AM, which had not increased its 8.9% in 1972, but had decreased to 8% by 1974.

Minority percentages in 1972 and 1974 in the top four job categories for stations renewed included: zero for WDVR-FM (improved to 5.9%); zero for WMMR-FM (improved to 8.3%); and 3.3% for WPHL-TV (improved to 14.8%).¹¹⁴ Clearly, these stations did not have to run on their license term record.

8. *Cases Where A Finding Of Extreme Patterns of Statistical Discrimination Still Fails to Obtain a Hearing*

To our knowledge, in only three instances where renewal hearings have not been ordered has the Commission specifically stated that a licensee was below the "zone of reasonableness" for the expired license term. As previously mentioned, WHEC-TV in Rochester, New York, had no Black employees as of the last yearly FCC employment report before its license renewal application.¹¹⁵ Though the license was renewed because of a statistical increase in the post-license period, the Commission definitely states that zero Black employees during the license term in an SMSA 7% minority is below the "zone of reasonableness."

Likewise, WOKR-TV, also in Rochester, was found to be "well below the zone of reasonableness in 1971" with Black employment of 1.4% the last year of reporting before renewal.¹¹⁶ But its affirmative action program was deemed satisfactory and the license was renewed.

The third station unequivocally found below the "zone of reasonableness" during its license term was KONO, San Antonio.¹¹⁷ This case is discussed in greater detail below, as an example of the length to which the FCC will go to avoid the renewal hearing required by its statutory mandate even when an EEO rule violation is evident.

For WHAM and WHFM(FM), zero Black employees in the 6.5% Black population within the Rochester SMSA was also held to be beyond the "zone," but the statistics used showing the zeros were from years subsequent to the renewal application.¹¹⁸ And, as also noted above, zero minority employment two years *after* the renewal petition was filed was the relevant "beyond the zone" finding for WIOQ-FM in Philadelphia.

None of these poor statistical performances were alone found to be a *prima facie* case of employment discrimination, to raise a substantial and material question of fact, to require a hearing, to be not in the public interest, or to justify a

113. *Id.* at 114.

114. *Id.* at 117.

115. WHEC, Inc., 52 F.C.C.2d 1079, 1088 (1975).

116. Flower City Television Corporation, File No. BRCT-673 (FCC, December 29, 1975).

117. Mission Central Company, 54 F.C.C.2d 581 (1975), see *infra*, pp. 59-63.

118. 53 F.C.C.2d at 363.

denial of the renewal application. The Commission's entire approach to statistics can be restated as follows: If the station's statistics are deemed beyond the "zone of reasonableness" further examination will be given to (1) post-license term employment statistics and (2) evidence of an affirmative action program. Thus, *despite Court of Appeals language to the contrary, statistics alone cannot in FCC practice trigger the necessary inferences of employment discrimination* to provide local citizens with the tools of discovery to delve further into the reasons—discriminatory or good faith—behind them: "A statistical disparity between the percentage of minority employees on KQED's staff and the overall population does not establish a *prima facie* case of discrimination where, as here, licensee has demonstrated that it has followed practices designed to improve the employment status of minorities."¹¹⁹

The vice inherent in such a practice is manifest. A broadcaster is invited by the FCC not to worry at all about a poor statistical employment performance during its license term. Once the petition to deny is filed by local citizens, he can immediately file a comprehensive amended affirmative action program and/or rapidly improve its minority or female employment statistics. The broadcaster complained of goes through the loopholes the Commission's past practices have provided for him in terms of quick upgrading, and the citizens are given no additional discovery tools. This makes it virtually impossible for a petition to allege substantial or material questions of fact as to employment practices beyond statistics and therefore mandate a renewal hearing. Thus, in effect, citizens are forced to file against virtually every station in each market *seriatim*, in order to stimulate upgrading movement.

9. *The Ultimate Example: Statistical Performance Outside the Zone Plus An Inadequate Affirmative Action Program Fails To Trigger A Hearing (KONO-AM, San Antonio)*

The previously mentioned 1974 KONO, San Antonio, license renewal¹²⁰ contains some of the best FCC language in recent years. Yet in its result it stands as one of the clearest cases of Commission abuse of its alleged EEO commitment. KONO, like WOAI-TV and KITE, was also challenged by the Bilingual Bicultural Coalition on Mass Media.

The Coalition based their case on statistics showing a marked disparity between Mexican American representation on the station's overall work force and upper four job categories, and their San Antonio SMSA representation. The Commission unequivocally found KONO's employment statistics for both 1974 (the last year of the license) and 1975 to be below the "zone of reasonableness" for the 44.2% Mexican American SMSA.¹²¹ Mexican Americans comprised 16% of the KONO work force and 10.3% of the upper four job categories in 1974. In 1975 the overall figure changed, down to 14.6%, and up to 14.3% in the high-pay positions.

This finding that KONO was *below* the reasonable zone in 1974-75 with a three to one ratio is critical, since Mexican American employment statistics for other San Antonio stations that had, in previous years, been similar to and below those for KONO, had been found to be *within* the zone. The WOAI-TV statistics

119. KQED, Inc., File No. BRET-25, BRET-20e, ¶ 12 (FCC, December 30, 1975).

120. Mission Central Company, 54 F.C.C.2d 581, *aff'd* 56 F.C.C.2d 782 (1975).

121. *Id.* at 585.

in the 1974 Court of Appeals decision, *supra*, were four to one. The Commission explains this apparent contradiction as follows:

*The zone of reasonableness is a dynamic concept, which contracts as licensees are given time in which to implement antidiscrimination rules and policy. Therefore, a percentage of minority employment that once was held to fall within a zone of reasonableness, in light of the licensee's affirmative action program, might not still be contained in a contracted zone of reasonableness as interpreted three years later.*¹²²

We now know explicitly that the Commission's "zone of reasonableness" is going to get smaller with the passage of time. This appears to be a dramatic development. Logically a showing of approximate parity will be required at some future date.

The FCC, having found KONO's statistics both during and after the license term below the reasonable zone, had to consider its affirmative action program. It concluded that "Mission's affirmative action plan is passive" and "proposes inadequate measures designed to recruit" Mexican Americans.¹²³ But under prior law that finding should raise a substantial and material question of fact. As in the WHAM/WHFM renewal applications, a hearing is necessary at that point.

Incredibly, however, despite the specific FCC findings on both KONO's poor statistics and its inadequate affirmative action program, *no hearing was required* and the license was renewed. Extensive future reporting requirements were placed on KONO, including information on new hires, promotions, affirmative action efforts, personnel policies, and job structure analysis.¹²⁴ But this could still not resolve the ultimate question clearly raised by the explicit findings that KONO had *prima facie* violated the Commission's EEO rules—was it qualified to remain a Commission licensee? Only a hearing could resolve this issue.

Not only did the Commission deny a hearing, it also denied the Coalition's request to be allowed to serve KONO with written interrogatories and to take depositions to develop further facts as to the extent of and reasons for KONO's rule violations:

We reject as unnecessary and unwarranted petitioners' request for discovery procedures to inquire further into the allegations regarding Mission's employment practices raised in the petition to deny . . . In our view, the grant of authority to petitioners for the utilization of discovery devices would be repetitive in light of the additional filings required in the present case.¹²⁵

The FCC's resolution of this case shows precisely the need for such discovery, as the Court recognized in the previous *Bilingual* case. The Commission's firm statement that the acceptable disparity between minority employment percentages and population percentages shrinks over time is a positive step. But the result of the case is three steps backward. For years citizens have attempted to obtain hearings on the basis of inadequate statistics alone and have been told that a broadcaster's successful belated post-challenge statistical upgrade and affirmative action program is adequate remedy to any question raised by the license term

122. *Id.* (Emphasis added). This concept of a "dynamic zone" is repeated in the Commission's July, 1975, Notice of Inquiry on proposed new EEO rules (Docket No. 20550), Nondiscrimination of Licensees Employment Practices, 54 F.C.C.2d at 10. ¶ 23 at 10.

123. *Id.* at 587.

124. *Id.* at 588.

125. *Id.* at 588.

statistics. Now they are told that not even the combination of (1) *poor statistics* before and after the license term and (2) an *inadequate* or inactive *past and current affirmative action program* can raise substantial and material questions of fact mandating a hearing. So long as the licensee must report to the FCC in the future, no matter how bad its showing prior to the FCC decision, it can keep its license.

The KONO decision is now on appeal, thus the limits of FCC avoidance of renewal hearings will be tested. But as far as the FCC is concerned, now, employment statistics alone, even those beyond an arbitrary "zone of reasonableness," do not establish discrimination. The FCC still professes that "a renewal application should be designated for hearing where substantial and material questions of fact have been raised as to whether a licensee has discriminated and is continuing to discriminate."¹²⁶ But unlike cases in Title VII litigation, such questions are not held raised by statistics alone, and apparently not even when an affirmative action program been found totally passive in violation of Commission rules.

IV. A COMPARISON WITH FEDERAL COURT-DEVELOPED STANDARDS FOR USE OF STATISTICS IN CASES UNDER THE 1964 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT.

The standards measuring employment discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964¹²⁷ differ significantly from those used by the FCC. The Commission's "zone of reasonableness" standard is not at all consistent with the standard the Federal courts have used to measure a prohibited pattern of discrimination in Title VII litigation. The FCC standard for further inquiry in a full evidentiary hearing is that the petitioner must raise a "substantial and material question of fact" as to whether the licensee has violated the FCC's equal employment rules and policies.¹²⁸ That, as seen above, cannot be done by statistics alone. It can only be done first by making a strong statistical case outside the "zone of reasonableness" and, *additionally*, by alleging specific instances of discriminatory practices and/or an inadequate affirmative action program. Even if the local citizens are successful on both counts, a hearing is not assured, as seen in the *KONO* case.

A. *Statistical Establishment of a Prima Facie Case in Federal Court*

The courts' standard in Title VII cases places a much greater burden on the employer. Once the plaintiff establishes a *prima facie* statistical case of employment discrimination the burden of rebutting the charges shifts to the defendant (employer). The *prima facie* case can be established solely by statistics which, like the information easily available to the FCC on their annual Form 395, show a significant disparity between representation of women or a minority group in the employer's own overall work force or within certain job categories, and their presence in the working population.

A *prima facie* case is one which will sustain a judgment on the plaintiff's behalf unless contradicted by credible evidence offered by the defendant.¹²⁹ If the

126. Taft Broadcasting Company of Pennsylvania, Inc., FCC 75-1391, ¶ 6 (FCC, December 24, 1975).

127. 42 U.S.C. § 2000(e) *et seq.* (1972).

128. 47 U.S.C. § 309(e) (1970).

129. *Bailey v. Zlotnick*, 133 F.2d 35, 36 (1942).

prima facie showing of employment discrimination is not refuted by the defendant, a judgment for the Title VII plaintiff is in order. Since the *prima facie* case, if not rebutted, would support the judgment, certainly the weight of evidence the Federal courts require to establish it must be at least as great, if not greater, than the evidence that is necessary to raise a "substantial and material question of fact" to the FCC which merely requires a hearing under Section 309 of the Communications Act.

The courts recognize the great evidentiary value of statistics: "In racial discrimination cases, statistics often demonstrate more than the testimony of many witnesses, and they should be given proper effect by the courts."¹³⁰ It is our belief that the often cited aphorism, "statistics often tell much and the courts listen, has particular application in Title VII cases."¹³¹

The majority of Title VII cases dealing with statistics limit their use to showing a *prima facie* case. The 5th Circuit has stated:

These lopsided ratios¹³² are not conclusive proof of past or present discriminatory hiring practices; however they do present a *prima facie* case. The onus of going forward with the evidence and the burden of persuasion is thus on [the employer].¹³³

And the 9th Circuit has agreed:

On the basis that a showing of an absence or small Black union membership in a demographic area containing a substantial number of Black workers raises an inference that the racial imbalance is the result of discrimination, the burden of going forward and the burden of persuasion is shifted to the accused, for such a showing is enough to establish a *prima facie* case. In many cases the only available avenue of proof is the use of racial statistics to uncover clandestine and covert discrimination by the employer or union involved.¹³⁴

When the plaintiff's statistics establish the *prima facie* case of employment discrimination and the employer fails to address the burden, "the evidence establish[es] as a matter of law. . . the existence of . . . discrimination in violation of Title VII."¹³⁵

In giving weight to evidence of statistical disparity some cases have gone farther than holding that only a *prima facie* case is established: "We hold as a matter of law that these statistics, which revealed an extraordinarily small number of Black employees, except for the most part as menial laborers, established a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964."¹³⁶

130. *Jones v. Lee Way Motor Freight, Inc.*, 431 F.2d 245, 247 (10th Cir. 1970), *cert. denied*, 401 U.S. 954 (1971).

131. *U.S. v. Ironworkers Local 86*, 443 F.2d 544, 551 (9th Cir. 1971), *cert. denied*, 404 U.S. 984 (1971).

132. Showing in an area 30% Black that at the time of the suit there were 918 whites and 6 Blacks employed, and that subsequent new hires included 285 whites and 14 Blacks.

133. *U.S. v. Hayes International Corporation*, 456 F.2d 112, 120 (5th Cir. 1972).

134. *U.S. v. Ironworkers Local 86*, 443 F.2d 544, 551 (9th Cir. 1971), *cert. denied*, 404 U.S. 984 (1971). *See also*: *Afro American Patrolmen's League v. Duck*, 503 F.2d 294, 299 (6th Cir. 1974); *U.S. v. Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company*, 471 F.2d 582, 586 (4th Cir. 1972), *cert. denied*, 411 U.S. 939 (1973); *Carter v. Gallagher*, 452 F.2d 315 (8th Cir. 1971), *cert. denied*, 406 U.S. 950 (1972); *Rios v. Enterprise Association Steamfitters Local Union No. 638 of U.S.*, 326 F. Supp. 198 (S.D.N.Y. 1971).

135. *Wetzel v. Liberty Mutual Insurance Co.*, 508 F.2d 239, 259 (3d Cir. 1975), *cert. denied*, 95 S. Ct. 2415 (1975).

136. *Parham v. Southwestern Bell Telephone Co.*, 433 F.2d 421, 426 (8th Cir. 1970). *See also*: *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Detroit Edison Co.*, 515 F.2d 301, 312 (6th Cir. 1975);

Not only do statistics which show low minority representation in an employer's total work force establish a *prima facie* case, but so do statistics which show discrimination within certain job categories in its overall work force. Statistics on jobs by salary, departments and levels of responsibilities establishing a discriminatory pattern of stratification between departments and within departments, through assigning minority or female employees to lower paying, non-skilled pay groups, presents a *prima facie* case of employment discrimination.¹³⁷

B. *Federal Court Standards for Evaluating Post-Litigation Filing Upgrading of Statistics*

In Title VII cases the courts have been willing to accept to a limited extent evidence as to post-suit statistical improvement. But they do not give this evidence nearly so much weight as the FCC does to past-license term evidence of upgrading.

As we have shown, when a broadcaster presents the Commission with any evidence of post-license term minority employment statistics or specific allegations as to its affirmative action program it is automatically renewed, there will be no question of fact, and there will be no hearing. An employer in a Title VII suit, however, has much less leverage when it improves its minority employment after the initiation of the lawsuit:

The trial court erred in completely absolving the company of unlawful employment practices on the basis of changes in the appellee's recruitment practices and increased hiring of Blacks subsequent to the institution of this lawsuit. While an employer's more recent employment practices may bear upon the remedy sought, they do not affect the determination of whether the employer previously violated Title VII.¹³⁸

Thus there is a wide divergence in the standards used by the courts and the FCC in giving evidentiary credence to employment statistics achieved after suit is brought.

C. *Why the FCC Should Use Court-Developed Title VII Standards in Renewal Cases*

It is our contention that the FCC should use the court-developed Title VII standards in judging employment questions at renewal, whether or not a petition to deny has been filed against a license renewal application.

1. *Finding a Prima Facie Case Made*

The FCC can grant a broadcast license renewal application only upon making an affirmative finding that the public interest will be served by the renewal. 47 U.S.C. §§ 307(a) and 309(a). The FCC *must* designate a hearing on a renewal application if a petition to deny presents a substantial and material question of fact as to the licensee's performance during the license term *or* if for any other reason it cannot make the finding that renewal would be in the public interest.¹³⁹

Morrow v. Crisler, 479 F.2d 960, 962 (5th Cir. 1973); U.S. v. United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, Local 169, 457 F.2d 210, 214 (7th Cir. 1972).

137. Pettway v. American Cast Iron Pipe Company, 494 F.2d 211, 225 (5th Cir. 1974).

138. Parham v. Southwestern Bell Telephone Co., 433 F.2d 421, 426 (8th Cir. 1970).

139. 47 U.S.C. § 309(d)(2) and (e). See Office of Communication of United Church of Christ v. FCC, 359 F.2d 994, 1007 (1966).

The FCC itself stated in first announcing its intent to adopt nondiscrimination rules that:

[A] petition or complaint raising substantial issues of fact concerning discrimination in employment practices calls for full exploration by the Commission before the grant of the broadcast application before it.¹⁴⁰

At least twice the Commission has clearly stated that employment discrimination is not in the public interest: "[W]e simply do not see how the Commission could make the public interest finding as to a broadcast applicant who is deliberately pursuing or preparing to pursue a policy of discrimination."¹⁴¹ "[D]iscriminatory employment practices by a broadcast licensee are incompatible with the public interest."¹⁴²

More specifically, a violation of Title VII is not in the public interest. The Commission, citing *FCC v. American Broadcasting Co.*,¹⁴³ made clear from the outset of its regulation in this field that a violation of the laws of the United States by a broadcast licensee or applicant is crucial to and must be considered in determining if the "public interest" can be served.¹⁴⁴ A Title VII violation is one of those that raises the crucial question as to a broadcaster's ability to serve the public interest.¹⁴⁵

As shown, in Federal court a violation of Title VII showing employment discrimination is, when not rebutted, established by a statistical disparity. Post-suit improvements will not have any significant value in rebutting the *prima facie* case established by such statistics. Thus, if a violation of Title VII by a broadcaster has been held by the FCC not to be in the public interest, should it not take more than mere post-license term improvements for a broadcaster to avoid a hearing on the question raised by statistics which establish a *prima facie* Title VII violation during the license term in question? Should not the Commission recognize that a "substantial and material question of fact" is legally raised by such statistics?

In other words, (1) since the Federal courts say statistics establish a *prima facie* case of a Title VII violation and (2) the FCC says a Title VII violation by the broadcaster is not in the public interest, then (3) those statistics, which in fact can fully establish a violation of law in the courts, should in Commission proceedings be *at least* sufficient to simply raise a "substantial and material question of fact" as to the broadcaster's ability to serve the public interest, triggering an evidentiary hearing. Until the FCC uses Title VII statistical standards, local citizens face a strange dilemma. A local plaintiff could establish a *prima facie* case of employment discrimination in a Title VII suit against a broadcaster-employer, but at the same time it is impossible for local citizens, armed with the same statistics, to raise a sufficient question of fact at the FCC to obtain a hearing to determine if the broadcaster-licensee's renewal would serve the public interest.

How can a broadcaster's employment statistics be within any rational definition of a "zone of reasonableness" if they evidence a *prima facie* case of

140. Nondiscrimination Employment Practices of Broadcast Licensees, 13 F.C.C.2d 766, 771 (1968).

141. *Id.* at 769.

142. Nondiscrimination Employment Practices of Broadcast Licensees, 18 F.C.C.2d 240 (1969).

143. 374 U.S. 196 (1954).

144. Nondiscrimination Employment Practices of Broadcast Licensees, 13 F.C.C.2d 766, 768 (1968).

145. *Id.* at 769.

employment discrimination violating Title VII? The FCC, by recognizing this inconsistency forthrightly, and increasing full review of license renewal applications, could take a positive step towards effectuating its professed commitment to full participation by minorities and women in broadcast employment.

2. *Giving No Weight to Post-License Term Upgrading*

As also shown above the Federal courts do not place as much significance on upgraded employment statistics as does the Commission. Present FCC practice allows the licensee to use hastily improved post-license term statistics to escape a renewal hearing when the petitioner presents evidence of a poor minority employment record during the license term. This is a clearly erroneous time to allow the licensee to make use of improved statistics.

FCC Rules require that a hearing be designated when "substantial and material question of fact" have been raised. License term performance is the sole measure of whether such questions have been raised. The licensee's chance to use post-term statistics, if at all, to attempt to mitigate or answer a *prima facie* Title VII violation showing in a petition to deny should be at the full evidentiary hearing. At that time, after full testimony has been taken, the Commission may wish in fashioning a remedy to take into consideration evidence that shows a *bona fide* positive recruitment policy has been placed in effect at the station since the petition was filed. At and after the hearing, when the ultimate question is whether the renewal of the station's license is in the public interest, *not* whether a hearing should be designated, is the only conceivable time (if ever) that post license term improvements should have any bearing on an FCC renewal decision.

Even this weight would be a departure from the Federal court practices in Title VII litigation. In fact upgrading should not, as it does not in Title VII cases, affect the factual determination as to whether or not there was employment discrimination. As established in the first, 1966, *Office of Communication of United Church of Christ v. FCC* case, past performance is the best and perhaps only true criterion for determining whether renewal of a broadcaster's license is in the public interest:

When past performance is in conflict with the public interest, a very heavy burden rests on the renewal applicant to show how a renewal can be reconciled with the public interest. Like public officials charged with a public trust, a renewal applicant. . . must literally "run on his record."¹⁴⁶

3. *Giving Greater Weight to EEOC Title VII "Reasonable Cause" Findings*

As discussed above, the FCC in the *WRC-TV* case has refused to recognize an EEOC finding, based on statistics, of reasonable cause to believe a broadcaster is engaged in a pattern of practice of discrimination in violation of Title VII.¹⁴⁷ While the Commission said it will "take cognizance of a final determination,"¹⁴⁸ it found that the EEOC decision was not such a "final determination." Rather it found the matter was "still pending at the EEOC for conciliation attempts or possible court action."¹⁴⁹

146. 359 F.2d 994, 1007 (1966).

147. *National Broadcasting Co., Inc.*, 52 F.C.C.2d 273, note 4. 52 F.C.C.2d 273 (1973).

148. *Id.* at 292.

149. *Id.* at 293.

According to the FCC there would be no final determination and FCC recognition of the EEOC process until after the final outcome of any court proceedings if there were in fact such a suit.¹⁵⁰ Therefore the Commission found that "the petitioners have failed to raise any substantial or material questions of fact."¹⁵¹ The FCC said only that it *might* take some action (but not necessarily designate a hearing) once there is a "final determination" of the EEOC complaint. The EEOC has itself disputed this limited view of the Commission's duty in the equal employment area in an extensive brief filed with the Court in the *WRC* case.¹⁵²

The Commission says that it grants license renewal applications only when in the public interest. It says it realizes a hearing is necessary when a petitioner does raise a substantial and material question. It says it does believe violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act are not in the public interest. But if it does in fact intend to enforce its rules prohibiting employment discrimination, then it must give serious consideration to a finding by the EEOC, with its obvious expertise, that there is reasonable cause to believe that the evidence available reaches the level of a *prima facie* case of unlawful discrimination.

Certainly such a finding, based as it normally is upon an extensive investigation of the licensee's operations, not just statistics, must at least raise a substantial question of fact. The Commission says it does not consider the EEOC's reasonable cause finding the "final determination" that is necessary before FCC even considers the matter. However, as far as development of the facts is concerned, that determination by the EEOC is final.

By the time the EEOC reaches a reasonable cause finding, its investigative fact finding process is complete. The working facts for conciliation, negotiation or litigation have been fully developed by the agency. Thus the FCC, when presented with the reasonable cause finding, has all the facts it will ever obtain from the EEOC process. It is inexplicable that the Commission could sincerely believe that facts determined by the EEOC to constitute reasonable cause of discrimination should not be considered by the FCC as raising a material question of fact to be explored further by way of a renewal hearing.

The experience of local citizens groups wishing to raise the issue of poor broadcast employment records has thus been highly frustrating. Clearly the present practice does not present a "fair and reasonable opportunity for those challenging license renewals to seek explanations for the underemployment of minority groups."¹⁵³ Since the Commission allows broadcasters to avoid any questions as to their performance (thus requiring a hearing) if they present almost any favorable evidence in a written pleading, not susceptible to cross-examination, in opposition to a petition to deny, and since no discovery is allowed to a petitioner until a formal hearing is designated, local citizens still have no means for developing the underlying reasons for statistical disparities.

150. *Id.* at 293.

151. *Id.* at 294.

152. The FCC has recently taken its policy of deferral to the EEOC to its ultimate illogical extreme. In *Storer Broadcasting Co. (WJBK-TV, Detroit, Mich.)*, FCC 76-147 (March 4, 1976), the Commission held that it would refuse to act on complaints by individuals of employment discrimination filed with a petition to deny renewal not only where they had actually sought EEOC or state EEO agency redress, but also where "access to those agencies is available." This literally wipes out the possibility of a license hearing on EEO even if evidence *beyond* statistics is proffered.

153. *Bilingual*, 492 F.2d at 659.

In that event, said the Court in *Bilingual* two years ago, "hearings may have to be required based on such disparities alone, in order to provide the tools of discovery."¹⁵⁴ We have reached the point where renewal hearings must be required based on such disparities alone. It is time for either the Commission alone, or the Court on review of continued FCC failure to provide meaningful relief, to face this fact.

V. A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR INITIAL FCC EXAMINATION OF SPECIFIC STATISTICAL DISPARITIES THAT WOULD RAISE A FEDERAL COURT TITLE VII PRIMA FACIE CASE OF DISCRIMINATION

The FCC could begin to constructively address the shortcomings of its past years of frustrating effective EEO regulation by examining the records of approximately 461¹⁵⁵ stations and 16 broadcasting group headquarters.¹⁵⁶ These stations and headquarters are only the most egregious offenders against FCC rules and regulations. They fall within certain parameters chosen to limit the extent of this basic study. There are, however, many more stations which also clearly fall outside any rational zone of reasonableness, which have still gone unscrutinized by this study.

The source of the employment statistics for each station or headquarters discussed herein is the 1975 edition of the FCC's annual publication, *Employment in the Broadcasting Industry*. This document is released early each year by the Research Branch of the Broadcast Bureau, reporting the results of the previous annual FCC Forms 395 for the industry since 1971. These reports reflect the employment profiles for minority and female employment in each of nine job categories as well as total employment. Stations or headquarters with five or more employees must submit these forms to the FCC yearly.¹⁵⁷

A. *The Boundaries of the Proposed FCC Examination of Current Broadcast Employment of Minorities*

This study has examined the 1975 FCC Report for stations that fall within the following three criteria: 1) 10 or more full-time employees, 2) operation in a SMSA or non-SMSA service area with at least a 5% minority population, and, 3) zero full-time minority employees. Where the latest published statistics for a particular station or headquarters are from a year earlier than 1975, the study lists the station or headquarters only if it had zero *total* (both full-time and part-time) minority employees in that year.¹⁵⁸

1. *Ten Full Time Employees*

The ten full-time employee minimum is the present FCC reporting parameter for inclusion in its annual *Employment in the Broadcasting Industry* publication.

154. *Id.*

155. This figure represents 378 stations in service areas with at least 5% minority population reporting 10 or more full time employees but zero full time minority employees in 1975 plus 83 stations with the same characteristics but not reporting employment data in 1975. See discussion on Overall Station Data, *infra* note 156, at 8.

156. A station is either a TV, AM or FM station, or, if management so chooses to report on the FCC Form 395, an AM-FM combination.

157. Nondiscrimination Employment Practices of Broadcast Licensees, 23 F.C.C.2d 430 (1970).

158. The most recently published statistics for the earlier years do not identify the number of full time employees, but rather only the total number of employees.

Thus, since statistics are not available for stations and headquarters with between five and nine full-time employees (which are required to file 395 forms) such stations cannot be publicly scrutinized except by tedious examination of each station's individual 395 forms.

2. *A 5% Service Area Minority Population*

The second parameter of the study, a 5% minority population in the station's service area, is also the test the Commission states that it uses for its own closer review of employment performance. In 1972, the FCC began sending "letters of inquiry" to stations which, based on a review of their 1971 and 1972 annual employment reports, had "suspicious" minority or female employment records.¹⁵⁹ In such inquiries, including the *Florida Inquiry* discussed at length above, the Commission has been interested in stations located in service areas with 5% or more minority population which employed no full-time minority persons, or where full-time minority employment decreased from the previous years report.

The FCC also uses the first parameter of our study, since inquiry letters are directed only to stations with ten or more full-time employees. The inquiry letters merely request further information from the licensee, which is asked to explain why it feels it is in compliance with the Commission's EEO rules.

3. *Zero Minority Full-Time Employees*

The final parameter is zero minority employees, full-time in 1975 or total in earlier years. As this study has illustrated previously, the Commission, instead of stating exactly what it requires, chooses instead to use a vague and elusive "zone of reasonableness" standard of compliance. The zone does vary, but the Commission does not allow minority employment statistics which it finds to be below the zone to raise a "substantial and material question of fact" mandating a hearing on the license renewal, much less to establish a *prima facie* case of employment discrimination or to establish grounds to deny the renewal application outright.

It is the authors' contention that no matter what standard the Commission may choose to use, broadcasters with zero minority employment are clearly beyond any possible "zone of reasonableness." Moreover, we contend much more affirmative action by the FCC is required than merely sending letters of inquiry to the offending broadcasters, if the FCC is to make it clear to all broadcasters that its EEO program is seriously meant.

B. *The Study's Results*

The results of this study, using only material published by the FCC, make one wonder whether or not the Commission is paying any attention at all to the Form 395's once they are received.

1. *Overall Station Data*

In 1975 the Forms show that 378 stations had zero full-time minority employees in service areas with at least 5% minority population and with ten or more full-time employees. A majority of such stations, 212, were smaller stations, with 10-14 full time employees. But there were 110 stations employing

159. Equal Employment Opportunity Inquiry, 36 F.C.C.2d 515 (1972).

from 15-19 persons; 31 employing 20-24; and 25 employing 25 or more full-time employees. This data is analyzed by station size in Appendix A.

Of these 378 stations employing zero full-time minority workers in 1975, 209 employed no minorities at all, either full-time or part-time. (See Appendix B). Another 83 stations were not reported in the FCC national compilation for 1975 but were listed by the FCC as employing zero full- or part-time minority employees during the most recent year in which they last reported.

2. *Group Owners Headquarters*

Eleven broadcasting group headquarters located in SMSAs with at least a 5% minority population, employing at least ten full-time employees in 1975, had no full time minority employees. Those group station offices are Metromedia (Los Angeles); Turner Management (Atlanta); Globetrotter Communications (Chicago); Palmer Broadcasting (Davenport); Blackhawk Broadcasting (Waterloo); ABC and Booth American Company (Detroit); Star Stations and Storz Broadcasting (Omaha); Greater Media (New Brunswick, N.J.); and Capital Broadcasting (Raleigh). Five other headquarters reported zero minority employees, but their statistics were from earlier years.

3. *State Operated Stations*

Special note should be taken of several stations supported by the government listed in Appendix A as employing zero full time minority group members in 1975. Four state supported universities made particularly poor showings in minority employment at their broadcast outlets. Southern Illinois University (Carbondale) employed 22 full-time at its non-commercial TV station, WSIU-TV. The University of Missouri (Columbia) has 47 full-time employees at KOMU-TV. Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green, Ohio) employed 34 full time at WBGU-TV. And Ohio State University (Columbus) employed 33 full-time at its non-commercial AM and FM radio stations. None of these non-commercial licensees employed a single full-time minority group member.

4. *Clear Channel/High Power Radio Stations*

Clear channel, high power radio stations are among the most profitable in the business, and tend to have larger staffs. Yet two class I-A, clear channel, 50 kilowatt, AM stations employed zero full-time minority personnel in 1975: WHO-AM (Des Moines), owned by Palmer Broadcasting Company (43 full time employees), and WHAM-AM (Rochester), owned by Rust Communications Group (24 full-time employees). Rust also failed to employ any minority persons among 11 full-time employees at its sister station, WHAM-FM.

Three class II, 50 kilowatt stations are also included. The Hearst Corporation's WISN-AM-FM, Milwaukee (42 full-time employees), Big Country Radio's KYAK-AM, Anchorage (20 full-time employees), and KRLA-AM, Pasadena, California, whose license has been subject to litigation for 11 years (24 full-time employees), all failed to employ any minority group members full-time in 1975.

5. *Other Large Staff Station Examples*

The Roy H. Park Company operates two 20 full time but zero minority full-time employee broadcast units in Chattanooga, Tennessee: WDEF-TV, a VHF

CBS affiliate, employs 52 full-time; WDEF-AM-FM employs another 23 full-time. And Franklin Broadcasting's WFLN-AM-FM in Philadelphia employed no minority persons out of 22 full-time employees at the time their 1975 Forms 395 were filed. Their 1972 license renewal application has been deferred because of a poor minority employment record, subject to additional reporting requirements on their EEO efforts.¹⁶⁰

C. Further Notes on Methodology

1. The Study's Definition of Service Area

A further note on the methods employed in this study of 461 "suspect" stations and 16 headquarters is necessary. As previously stated, only stations or headquarters in areas with at least 5% minority population are listed. When the FCC examines minority employment statistics to determine if they are within the "zone of reasonableness," it compares the minority representation at the station to minority representation in the SMSA in which the station is licensed¹⁶¹ or, if it is outside an SMSA reference is made to the minority representation in the county in which it is licensed.¹⁶²

The same standards are used herein. If the station is in an SMSA, the SMSA minority representation, as published by the FCC in the annual report, is used. If it is not in a SMSA, population characteristics for the county of license are examined and a minority representation percentage is computed. These figures are based on the 1970 Census released by the Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census in the publication *General Population Characteristics*.

Several stations employing at least ten full-time persons, none of whom were minority group members, are not included because of the location of the city of license. Some stations serve a market area which includes an SMSA with at least 5% minority population but is licensed to a city outside the SMSA in a county with less than 5% minority population. Using Commission standards, the station is apparently not suspect. Yet they could in many cases draw their work force from the SMSA, and their signal covers it.

Examples are WOI-TV, WOI-AM-FM, and KASI-AM-FM in Ames, Iowa. They all employ ten or more full-time persons, but have no minority employees. Yet they serve the Des Moines, Iowa market. But the stations are not in the Des Moines SMSA; rather they are licensed in Story County, which borders the SMSA. The SMSA is greater than 5% minority, however, Story County is not. Thus, these stations are not considered suspect.

In such cases, the Commission should evaluate a station's EEO performance by the minority representation in the market it serves rather than the SMSA or county in which it is licensed. But in other cases where there is a large urban center-city minority population whole-market approach might so dilute the minority representation that it should not be used.

2. Reporting Year

Of the stations and headquarters listed in the Appendix, 83 stations and five headquarters listings are based on the most recent information (pre-1975), which

160. 53 F.C.C.2d 104 (1975).

161. *Stone v. FCC*, 466 F.2d at 316.

162. *Nondiscrimination of Licensees Employment Practices*, 54 F.C.C.2d 354, 360 n.2 (1975).

showed only zero *total* minority employees. For those listings, the most recent reporting year is marked with an asterisk (*).

3. *Stations Outside the Study*

The stations considered in this study represent only a fraction of those with unacceptable minority employment records. By examining stations only with ten or more employees this study bypassed 65.3% of broadcast licensees. (See Appendix C for numbers and percentages of broadcast stations with certain employee ranges.) Further, no note is made of stations with zero minority employment in a service area with less than 5% minority population.

Also excluded are stations which had only one full time minority employee in 1975 (or only one full- or part-time minority in an earlier year if that year's statistics are the most recent), even where, looked at more closely, the station's overall minority employment record would be clearly deficient given a great disparity between its minority employment percentage at the station and the percentage of minorities in the service area.

Thus the stations considered are only the most obvious violators. By no means should this be taken to mean that the rest of the industry's performance is satisfactory.

D. *The FCC's Failure to Pursue the Obvious Implications of its Own Statistical Summaries in its Administrative Enforcement of EEO*

To what extent has the Commission adhered to its stated policy of sending renewal year letters of inquiry to stations in service areas at least 5% minority which had no full-time minority employees but at least ten full-time employees? Of the 461 suspect stations reviewed, how many received those letters of inquiry at renewal time? The results show that, unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the FCC inquiry effort falls far short of what should be expected.

Every two months¹⁶³ all of the three year licenses of stations in certain states expire. It is at this time EEO letters of inquiry are sent. Among the employment information the Commission uses in determining which stations are to receive such letters are the FCC Forms 395 most recently filed.

Because there is a certain amount of time necessary for the Commission to compile and organize the Forms for all stations (which are filed on May 31 of each year), the FCC's EEO Office in the Renewal and Transfer Division does not have the current year's statistics available for use until the October 1 renewals/letters of inquiry. Although the Commission does not publish call letters of stations which receive these EEO inquiries, internal FCC lists of stations which received such letters at renewal time were made available to the authors of this study.¹⁶⁴

1. *The FCC's Use of 1975 Form 395 Statistics for Letters of Inquiry*

The October 1, 1975 license renewal period was the first for which the 1975 FCC Form 395 statistics, upon which this study was based, were available. That renewal period was for stations in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the

163. February 1, April 1, June 1, August 1, October 1, and December 1.

164. The failure of the FCC to publish and widely disseminate these lists and note the availability of station responses seems directly contrary to the Court of Appeals mandate in *Bilingual*, *supra* at note 4, to provide the public with the tools to evaluate station performance in this area.

District of Columbia. The Commission sent letters of inquiry to 13 stations. Seventeen Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia stations and no District of Columbia stations were suspect under the study's, and presumably the FCC's, standards. Only seven of the 17 received Commission letters of inquiry. Ten others were not subject to any EEO inquiry.

The next period for which the Commission had available the 1975 Form 395 information was the December 1, 1975 renewals for stations in North and South Carolina. The Commission sent letters of inquiry to nine stations. Twenty suspect stations were found by our study. None of them received FCC letters of inquiry.

The most recent renewal period examined by this study was that for Florida and Puerto Rico stations on February 1, 1976. Fourteen stations in Florida and one in Puerto Rico received EEO letters of inquiry. Based on 1975 performance, 19 suspect stations were discovered in Florida and one in Puerto Rico. Only four of the 19 Florida suspect stations received FCC letters of inquiry. The remaining 15 Florida stations and the Puerto-Rican station were not requested to provide additional data.

This record is unacceptable. In the states which had renewal periods from October 1975, when 1975 FCC Form 395 statistics were available to the Commission's EEO Office, EEO letters of inquiry were sent to only 11 renewal applicants of the 57 which reported in the 1975 Form 395 ten or more full-time employees but zero full-time minority employees and operated in a service area with at least a 5% minority population. Of the 57 suspect stations, fully 46 (more than 80%) were subject to absolutely no Commission questioning concerning their 1975 EEO performance.

2. *FCC Letters of Inquiry Based on 1974 Statistics*

A further examination of the FCC's letters of inquiry process for licenses renewed when 1974 Form 395 information was the most recent available to its EEO Office can be made. That would be for the renewals on October 1 and December 1, 1974, and February 1, April 1, June 1, and August 1, 1975.

Suspect stations cannot be as readily identified from 1974 data for several reasons. First, the 1974 employment information in the 1975 issue of the FCC's *Employment in the Broadcasting Industry*, the heart of this study, lists only figures for total employment. It does not, as with the 1975 statistics, list both part-time and full-time totals separately. Therefore the number of stations found suspect based on 1974 statistics showing zero *total* minority employment will be smaller than they would be if information on 1974 *full-time* employment were also given.

Many stations with zero total minority employees in 1974 have escaped the scrutiny of this study because of its threshold boundaries. Since stations are considered only if the statistics published in 1975 show zero minority employment, stations with zero minority employment in earlier years may or may not be listed. If a station had zero full-time minority employment in 1975 and zero total minority employment in 1974, it is within the purview of this study. If such a station's renewal period was one of the six between October 1, 1974 and August 1, 1975, we can determine whether or not a letter of inquiry was sent. But a station with zero total minority employment in 1974 would escape this study's boundaries if it had added only one full-time minority employee in 1975.

Thus because of the inherent limitations of this study, many 1974 zero total minority stations which should have received letters of inquiry are missed. Because of these limitations, the number of suspect stations based on 1974 employment statistics which should have received letters of inquiry will be much smaller than the total number of 1974 zero full-time minority employment stations. Nevertheless, even with these analytical barriers, 61 suspect stations were found which, based on 1974 employment statistics, should have received FCC letters of inquiry.

At the time this portion of the study was conducted, in early February 1976, the Commission had received responses to all the letters of inquiry it had sent from October 1, 1974 renewals to the August 1, 1975 renewals, and had acted on each of them. The FCC had sent 86 EEO letters of inquiry to stations it deemed suspect. One station's renewal was deferred pending receipt of additional EEO reports; no action was taken on one inquiry because the license renewal was already designated for hearing; and 18 licenses were renewed but subject to additional EEO reporting.¹⁶⁵ The remaining 66 licenses were renewed without further inquiry, based on responses to the Commission letters. (See Appendix D for a state by state breakdown of Commission action.)

The October 1, 1974 renewals for stations in Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming stimulated 20 FCC EEO letters of inquiry. The licenses of eight stations were renewed unconditionally. Eleven stations received renewals subject to additional EEO reporting. No action was taken on one letter of inquiry because the license had been designated for hearing. In these states each of the six 1974 data-based suspect stations found by this study received letters of inquiry from the Commission.

The next renewal period was on December 1, 1974, for California stations. Letters of inquiry were sent to 16 stations. One station's renewal was deferred after the inquiry, pending receipt of additional EEO information. One license was renewed subject to additional EEO reporting. Fourteen licenses were renewed unconditionally. Nine 1974 data-based California suspect stations were found by this study, but only one received an FCC inquiry letter.

The February 1, 1975 renewal period covered the remaining western stations—those in Alaska, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington. Ten received letters of inquiry, but all licenses were eventually renewed with no further reporting requirements. Our study showed 12 suspect stations based on 1974 data in this renewal group. Only two received letters of inquiry. The remaining 10 stations were subject to no inquiry whatsoever.

The April 1, 1975 renewal period for stations in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont only brought two FCC letters of inquiry. Both licenses were renewed, and only one had additional EEO reporting requirements imposed. Those two stations were among the ten 1974 data-based suspect stations our study found in the area, but the remaining eight were not considered subject to further inquiry by the FCC.

New York and New Jersey renewals were next, on June 1, 1975. The FCC directed EEO letters of inquiry to 15 stations. It later renewed all the licenses but

165. The stations were required to submit within 30 days names of local minority and women groups for recruiting purposes and a job structure analysis. They were also required to submit at their next license renewal a list of all persons hired and a detailed description of the station's EEO efforts.

imposed additional reporting requirements on five of them. Four of the stations receiving letters were among the 14 1974 suspect stations we have listed in our study, but 10 received no Commission inquiry.

The final renewal period using 1974 employment statistics was August 1, 1975, for stations in Delaware and Pennsylvania. The Commission sent out 23 inquiries, more than the usual number. But the station replies led the FCC to renew all of them without further reporting. Nine stations were found with zero total minority employees in 1974. Of the nine 1974 data-based suspect stations listed in our study, only four received FCC letters.

In sum, the FCC's record in sending EEO letters of inquiry in the six renewal periods during the 12 months when 1974 employment statistics were the most recent available is not significantly better than its performance in the three renewal periods in which 1975 statistics were available. Some apparent improvement in the FCC's prior performance can be traced to the more limited parameters available to the authors to find stations suspect based on 1974 statistics.

In total, 61 suspect stations were found based on 1974 data. The Commission sent letters of inquiry to 19 of them, just over 31%. Of those 19 suspect stations ten licenses were unconditionally renewed, eight more were renewed with the additional EEO reporting requirements, and one license was deferred pending additional reporting. The remaining 42 (or almost 70%) of the suspect stations based on 1974 data received no inquiry as to why they had zero total minority employees.

In each renewal period the Commission sent letters of inquiry to many stations not considered suspect for purposes of this study. This is of course due to the limitations of the study, which does not purport to examine any statistical inference of performance outside the "zone of reasonableness" based on employment of one or more employees. But, based on the Commission's failure to send letters of inquiry to many stations with zero minority employees, it is logical to assume that the percentage of stations which are statistically suspect based on a wide disparity between minimal minority or female employment and area population or work force or other similar criteria, and which receive letters of inquiry, is correspondingly low.

Other suspect areas which should trigger an inquiry should include: (1) zero female employees; (2) a decline in minority or female employees from one year to the next; (3) a decline in or zero minority or female employees in the upper four job categories; (4) any apparent reshuffling of employees between categories on the FCC Form 395; (5) affirmative action programs which merely repeat FCC guidelines; and (6) patently ineffective, passive or abandoned affirmative action programs (i.e., "affirmative inaction"). Full FCC scrutiny should be triggered when a station is lacking in any one of these areas, not just, as appears to be FCC practice, when its failures span several areas.

VI. CONCLUSION

Given EEO inquiry performances like these, is there really any question why so many broadcasters continue to fail to take affirmative steps to utilize minority group members as employees? If the FCC record of inquiry is so poor with the suspect stations in this study, with totally inactive records, what can be the extent of Commission concern with the other more than 8,000 stations?

This FCC record is why local citizens, in order to obtain their right to licensee service not tainted by discrimination, have had to carry the major share of the burden of confronting the stations with inadequate performance through dialogue, negotiation, local agreements and, if necessary, litigation. But should citizens have to resort to negotiation or the filing of informal complaints, petitions to deny and Title VII complaints to the EEOC to get stations to abide by FCC rules and Federal law?

The FCC, in its July 1975 *Notice of Inquiry* on equal employment policy,¹⁶⁶ stated its desire and intention to rationalize this process and adopt a remedial approach that would be able to be implemented through the Commission's own investigative resources and available sanctions. But its failure to rationally and effectively conduct its investigations to date, as documented by this study, casts significant doubt on its ability to carry through with this proposal.

In order to do so, it will clearly have to develop a larger staff to effectively use the statistics it gathers to monitor EEO compliance, and develop a greater familiarity with and sensitivity to the proper use of statistical inferences as developed by federal case law in Title VI litigation. In addition, it will have to develop a clearer standard for its "dynamic" zone of reasonableness, for what quantum of statistical or other evidence triggers an evidentiary hearing, and eliminate the use of post-complaint upgrading as a factor in designating such hearings.

Finally, it should recognize that the tools it has administratively developed to deal with EEO problems outside a renewal hearing are inadequate to assume meaningful change, and move to remedies similar to those used by the Federal courts and the EEOC—targeted goals and timetables—for rapid movement towards parity in employment of minorities and women by broadcast licensees.

This study is offered as a stimulus to such constructive change.

166. Docket No. 20550, *supra*.

APPENDIX A

Stations in Service Areas with at least 5% Minority Population Reporting 10 or more Full-Time Employees but Zero Full-time Minority Employees in 1975.

<i>Employee Range</i>	<i>Number of Stations</i>	<i>% of the Total</i>
10-14	212	56.1
15-19	110	29.1
20-24	31	8.2
25+	<u>25</u>	<u>6.6</u>
Total	378	100

APPENDIX B

Stations in Service Areas with at least 5% Minority Population Reporting 10 or more Full-Time Employees but Zero Total Minority Employees in 1975.

<i>Employee Range</i>	<i>Number of Stations</i>	<i>% of the Total</i>
10-14	42	20.1
15-19	97	46.4
20-24	46	22.0
25+	<u>24</u>	<u>11.5</u>
Total	209	100

APPENDIX C

Station Employee Distribution, 1974 FCC data.

<i>Employee Range</i>	<i>Number of Station</i>	<i>% of the Total</i>
1-4	2,657	30.6
5-9	3,013	34.7
10-14	1,128	13.0
15-24	899	10.3
25-49	562	6.5
50-99	293	3.4
100+	<u>135</u>	<u>1.5</u>
Total	8,687	100

APPENDIX D

FCC Action on Letters of Inquiry Sent October 1, 1974-August 1, 1975.

Renewal Period	States	Number of Stations Receiving Letters	No Action Pending Hearing	Deferred Pending EEO Information	Renewed Subject to EEO Reporting	Renewed
October 1, 1974	Az., Id., Nv. N.M., Ut., Wy.	20	1	0	11	8
December 1, 1974	California,	16	0	1	1	14
February 1, 1975	Or., Wa., Al., Ha.	10	0	0	0	10
April 1, 1975	Ct., Me., Ma., N.H., Vt., R.I.	2	0	0	1	1
June 1, 1975	N.J., N.Y.	15	0	0	5	10
August 1, 1975	Del., Pa.	<u>23</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>23</u>
		86	1	1	18	66