

Last year the Benton Foundation joined forces with two broad coalitions of organizations focused on delivering public dividends with the transition to digital television. Working with these groups, the FCC recently extended a requirement that broadcasters air a minimum of three hours a week of quality educational and instructional programming for children to all of their new digital channels. It is also exploring proposals that would benefit our democratic process and our society by requiring broadcasters to (1) Air a minimum of three hours per week of local civic or electoral affairs programming on the most-watched channel they operate; (2) Promote the FCC's oft-stated goal of diverse viewpoints and voices on television by ensuring that independent producers provide a minimum of 25 percent of their most-watched channel's primetime schedule; and (3) Tell the public how they are serving the interests of their audiences by making this information available in a standardized hard copy and website formats.

These really are minimal requirements, but nonetheless often opposed or ignored by the broadcasters. We are arguing that it's time to put the remote control back into the public's hands and once again give the public greater control over the kind of democracy they participate in, the children they raise, and the security they deserve.

Congress, the courts, regulators and companies are continuing to make communications policy decisions. These decisions will have far-reaching consequences for competition and innovation and ultimately consumer well-being in the media marketplace. While public concern was raised over the FCC's media ownership decisions, too few individuals are aware that broadcasters are obligated to serve them—or that they can get involved in ensuring they do. For those who understand the crucial role of media in this democracy, our first task is to inform and educate the public about this debate and the right of all Americans to participate in it.

In addition to a clearer television picture, consumers need a clearer regulatory picture for how the digital television transition will impact their lives. Consumers deserve to know how broadcasters will serve their day to day television needs—healthy programming for children, healthy programming for our democracy, and healthy programming for our communities. Citizens need as much information about the TV that comes into our living rooms, as about the food that comes into our kitchens.

But to achieve these goals, parents, voters, community leaders, activists, and concerned citizens need to pick up the television policy remote control—and change the tune coming from policymakers in Washington. It takes letting policymakers know that you want reality based public interest obligations that can help make a difference in your lives.

The first product of a coalition of national and local media advocates is a Citizens' Bill of Media Rights—a positive statement of principles and goals of a media reform movement. The Bill has recently been circulated for sign-on. If my message tonight makes you want to get involved, here's the first thing you can do: Read "Citizens' Bill of Media Rights," go online, and sign-on.

At the Benton Foundation, we are releasing the Citizen's Guide to the Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters. Our

guide will serve as a primer for the organizations and people considering taking the policy remote control out of the hands of media giants and their lobbyists and returning it where it belongs—in the hands of the American people, especially in your community. Action item two: check www.benton.org for the guide.

This year in mid-May, activists, media creators, academics, and policy makers will meet for three days of learning, sharing, networking and momentum building at the 2nd 2005 National Conference for Media Reform in Saint Louis. Visit www.freepress.net for more information. Action item three: Meet Me In Saint Louis.

There are many valuable resources for keeping up to date on what's going on in media policy—let me highlight two. At the Benton Foundation, we provide a service which summarizes the top communications policy stories of the day. The service, Communications-Related Headlines, is delivered via e-mail and is also available on our web site free of charge, www.benton.org. Action item four: subscribe to Headlines.

HearUsNow.org follows Consumers Union's long tradition of promoting a fair and just marketplace by empowering consumers to fight for better and more affordable telephone, cable and Internet services or equipment. By focusing on major media, technology and communications issues and emphasizing local stories, HearUsNow.org will help explain increasingly complex issues and the connections between these issues, underscore what's at stake, and offer ways to make improvements. Action item five: Visit www.hearusnow.org.

Obviously, when working against corporate interests ready to devote billions of dollars to their cause, even more resources will be needed to win the day. Last April, I delivered this message to an audience of philanthropists asking them to fund the ongoing efforts to shape our media future . . . to fund media policy research, education and advocacy. I am happy to say that there's hope coming from this important arena: The Arca Foundation board has committed \$1 million—\$1.5 million per year for the next 3–5 years to a strategic media policy campaign for policy advocacy, organizing, research and content development. With Ford Foundation leadership, the Grantmakers in Film and Electronic Media's new Working Group on Electronic Media Policy was formed to respond to the burgeoning interest among grantmakers to build and share knowledge about key issues in media policy, as well as undertake targeted activities to help advance the dynamic media policy field. All participants hope that this funder cooperation will result in real capacity building for the media reform field.

Several members of Congress, including Representative HINCHEY, are forming a Congressional Media Reform Caucus this month to focus on media ownership, digital transition, and other media-related issues. Last year, Representative HINCHEY introduced the Media Ownership Reform Act. This proposed legislation has three goals: (1) To curb the deregulatory zeal of the Republican majority at the FCC; (2) To restore the Fairness Doctrine; and (3) To reform the broadcast license renewal process and require broadcasters to report both on their public interest performance and their plans for doing so every two years. In today's political climate, the legislation may seem improbable. But most significantly, it

provides a vision of where we'll be when we have true democratic media reform in this country.

Again, we're at a crossroads. Left to its own designs, the majority at the FCC will fight to allow greater consolidation in media ownership while further weakening public interest obligations. With public pressure, with your participation, we may help the FCC envision a democratic media future. In this alternative vision, we, as Americans, could have a media environment that delivers a vigorous, uninhibited marketplace of ideas. In this alternative vision, we could have a media that reflects and responds to local communities. In this alternative vision, we could have a media environment that embraces and enhances the public interest.

Wouldn't you like to be part of that debate and help shape this more democratic and more open media environment? If so, why not join us and get involved?"

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SUSAN HARTLEY, BURGESS DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the many accomplishments of Susan Hartley, Burgess Discipline Alternative School Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Hartley has a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science from Arizona State University, and a Teacher Certification from Ottawa University. She is a relatively new teacher—she has been teaching for 5 years, all of them spent at the Sequin Independent School District.

Ms. Hartley teaches Science and Health to grades 7 through 12. She deals with what can often be a difficult and stressful job in a counterintuitive way: her goal is to make school fun, for herself and her students.

She believes that students learn best when they are enjoying themselves. Her at-risk students are often disconnected from the school or community. She feels that her role is to help these students find ways to reconnect with others. Students who feel like they are part of the community are less likely to be in trouble, and more likely to go on to a successful future.

Ms. Hartley's work with at-risk youth has already distinguished her as one of her school district's most valuable teachers. In her 5 years, she has made a difference in the life of many students, and in the life of her community. She has a bright future ahead of her, and I am happy to have had this opportunity to recognize her.

TRIBUTE TO RUTH VAN GERPEN AND THE ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY

HON. JEFF FORTENBERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Oncology Nursing Society

(Oncology Nurse Ruth Van Gerpen. Oncology nurses play an important and essential role in providing quality cancer care. These nurses are principally involved in the administration and monitoring of chemotherapy and the associated side-effects patients experience. As anyone ever treated for cancer will tell you, oncology nurses are intelligent, well-trained, highly skilled, kind-hearted angels who provide quality clinical, psychosocial and supportive care to patients and their families. In short, they are integral to our nation's cancer care delivery system. ONS has five chapters that serve the oncology nurses of Nebraska and help them continue to provide the best possible cancer care to patients and their families in our state.

On behalf of the people with cancer and their families in Nebraska's First Congressional District, I would like to specifically acknowledge Ruth Van Gerpen for her leadership within the Oncology Nursing Society as a member of the ONS Board of Directors. Ruth is a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) for oncology at BryanLGH Medical Center in Lincoln, Nebraska. She has been an RN for 28 years and has devoted 20 of those years to oncology nursing. Ruth works to improve patient outcomes, enhance professional and consumer awareness, and educate and support newly diagnosed individuals and their families. Through Ruth's and ONS' leadership, our nation is charting a course that will help us win the war on cancer.

Cancer is a complex, multifaceted and chronic disease, and people with cancer are best served by a multidisciplinary health care team specialized in oncology care, including nurses who are certified in that specialty. According to the American Cancer Society, one in three women and one in two men will receive a diagnosis of cancer at some point in their lives, and one out of every four deaths in the United States results from cancer. This year approximately 1.37 million people will be diagnosed with cancer and another 570,000 will lose their battles with this terrible disease. Every day, oncology nurses such as Ruth see the pain and suffering caused by cancer and understand the physical, emotional, and financial challenges that people with cancer face throughout their diagnosis and treatment.

Today, more than two-thirds of cancer cases strike people over the age of 65, and the number of cancer cases diagnosed among senior citizens is projected to double by 2030. At the same time, many of the community-based cancer centers are facing significant barriers in hiring the specialized oncology nurses they need to treat cancer patients. We are on the verge of a major national nursing shortage, and it is estimated that there will be a shortage of 1.1 million nurses in the year 2015.

The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) is the largest organization of oncology health professionals in the world, with more than 31,000 registered nurses and other health care professionals. Since 1975, the Oncology Nursing Society has been dedicated to excellence in patient care, teaching, research, administration and education in the field of oncology. The Society's mission is to promote excellence in oncology nursing and quality cancer care. To that end, ONS honors and maintains nursing's historical and essential commitment to advocacy for the public good by providing nurses and healthcare professionals with access to

the highest quality educational programs, cancer-care resources, research opportunities and networks for peer support.

I commend Ruth Van Gerpen for her leadership and ongoing commitment to improving and assuring access to quality cancer care for cancer patients and their families, and I urge my colleagues to support oncology nurses in their important endeavors.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF
ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of His Eminence, Archbishop Iakovos, who faithfully led the Greek Orthodox Church in North and South America for over thirty years. With his passing on April 10th, the world lost a great spiritual leader and humanitarian who desired peace and unity between all nations and religions.

Archbishop Iakovos, who was born as Demetrios Coucouzis on July 29, 1911, first set foot on American shores in 1939, after graduating from the Halki Theological Seminary. In 1945 he received a graduate degree from Harvard Theological Seminary and five years later he became an official U.S. citizen.

When Archbishop Iakovos became the leader of the Orthodox faithful in 1959, he made it his goal to bring the church into mainstream life for his followers. In the spirit of incorporating Greek Orthodoxy in America, he encouraged the use of English in the liturgy, set up dialogues with other Christian denominations, as well as Jewish and Muslim leaders, and became the first Archbishop to meet with a Roman Catholic Pope in 350 years.

As a humanitarian, Archbishop Iakovos also became very interested in political issues, particularly those impacting human and civil rights. He regularly visited the White House and met with every U.S. president from Eisenhower to Clinton. His strong vision for peace compelled him to voice his opposition to the Vietnam War, support for the rights of Soviet Jews, and encouragement for the Middle East Peace process. As a champion of social causes, he will forever be remembered for assisting the civil rights movement in America by marching in 1965 with Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma, Alabama.

Throughout his career, Archbishop Iakovos was highly honored for his work. In 1980, former President Jimmy Carter awarded him the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. He served on the World Council of Churches and also was awarded honorary degrees from over forty colleges and universities.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the life and legacy of Archbishop Iakovos, who through faithful leadership brought the ideas of faith, equality, peace, and unity to the forefront of the world's political and religious stage.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF CELIA
BARRAGAN OF CANYON INTER-
MEDIATE SCHOOL

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the many, accomplishments of Celia Barragan, Canyon High School Teacher of the Year.

Celia Barragan received both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Texas State University in San Marcos. She currently teaches fourth grade in Comal Independent School District. With over twenty-eight years of experience in teaching, she understands the unique needs of our kids.

She personally believes that the two most important qualities that can be nurtured are "positive self-esteem" and "responsibility". Teaching young people to place value in these virtues is important for skills and development later in life. With a long and distinguished career, Celia Barragan has helped generations of our students to excel in, school.

I am proud to have this opportunity to honor the contributions of Celia Barragan, the Canyon Intermediate School Teacher of the Year. Her many years of passionate service have been a blessing to the Comal community.

LONGFORD WATER COMPANY, LLC

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of the citizens of Longford, Kansas in their work to create and support Longford Water Company, LLC.

For years, this town of 89 people has had a reputation for providing high quality, good tasting water. Road signs near the community advised, "For Good Health and Longevity Drink Longford Water, Kansas Purest." Groundwater from Longford is clean and soft because it is naturally filtered by a distinctive group of underground rocks known as the Kiowa Formation. Years ago, communities used to compete at the Kansas State Fair regarding the quality of their water. Water from Longford was a frequent winner.

More than a year and a half ago, a group of local individuals formed Longford Water Company, LLC. The reason: to research the possibility of capitalizing on Longford's reputation for high quality water by bottling it for sale. They discovered that most of the bottled water for sale has been treated by reverse osmosis, a process used to purify water through removal of unwanted chemicals. This procedure is expensive and removes natural minerals from the water that contribute to good physical health. Due to its high quality, Longford water does not need to be subjected to this added expense.

Following extensive research, the company took the following actions: announced that the production facility will be located in Longford; agreed to purchase water from the City of Longford; in order to minimize marketing and shipping costs, established a marketing distribution system that focuses on a 50-mile