

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL J. COPPS,
NOMINATED TO BE A MEMBER,
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

Mr. Chairman, Senator Hollings, Members of the Committee, thank you for granting us this hearing so soon after our nominations. We know how crowded the Committee's docket is, and we appreciate your prompt attention in bringing us together. Thank you also to the many Senators with whom I have been privileged to meet over the past few weeks since my nomination by President Bush. These discussions have been invaluable to me in learning more about your priorities and about the many issues with which, if confirmed, I will be grappling at the Commission. I look forward to many more such meetings with each of you and your fine staffs.

Permit me a moment to thank my mentor and my friend, Senator Hollings, for his warm and generous introduction. The formative years of my career in Washington, and in so many ways the best years, came in working with Senator Hollings from 1970 to 1985, and I am enormously grateful to him not only for the support he has given me, but for the knowledge and wisdom that he imparted, the experiences he shared and the lessons he taught.

When I think of public service at its best, I think of Senator Hollings and the intelligence and commitment he has brought to his long and productive service to the people of South Carolina and the Nation. But it is not only his tremendous record of accomplishment that I admire. Equally, I admire the respect in which he holds public service and the effort he has made to bring credibility and the restoration of pride to the honorable calling that is public service. I could never find the words to express the admiration and the appreciation that I feel for him.

Mr. Chairman, my 15 years working here in the Senate imparted a deep and lasting loyalty to the Legislative Branch of our government, so when I say to you how much I look forward to working with you and your colleagues if confirmed, I am saying something that comes not just from my brain, but from my bones. I cannot imagine being effective in this job without having a close, ongoing and cooperative relationship with each of you, this Committee and your Congressional colleagues. The FCC is the creation of Congress whose mission is to carry out the responsibilities that have been conferred upon it legislatively. It's always politic to talk cooperation, I know, but I just don't believe this country can accomplish what it needs to accomplish, in telecommunications or anything else, without this kind of communication. I have worked to build such relationships with Congress in every capacity I have served in this city. I look forward, if confirmed, to implementing the laws Congress has passed, with as thorough an understanding of Congressional intent as I can muster.

Mr. Chairman, I am humbled at this nomination by the President and the support I have received from so many Senators. And I am enormously excited at the possibility of serving as Commissioner. To be an active participant in the deliberations of the FCC as the telecommunications revolution transforms our lives and remakes our world is a privilege few are given. I believe that in telecom, we haven't seen anything yet. I believe that telecommunications will transform this nation of ours more in the next 50 years than it did over the past 50 remarkable years. We will work differently, learn differently, play differently, perhaps even govern ourselves differently, because of the transformative power of telecommunications.

I know that many of the issues presently before the Commission are highly contentious. If they were easily resolved, they would have been resolved already. And who knows what new and presently unforeseen issues we will be dealing with just a year or two hence? But I'm an optimist. (Some have told me I will need this sense of optimism if I make it to the Commission!) I believe that we can do a better job of working together, industry and government and all the many other stakeholders in the Communications Revolution, to make sure that our nation and our people continue to lead and prosper from this exciting revolution. I enjoy bringing people together, working with stakeholders, and, together, finding workable solutions for tough problems. This is what I focused on during my eight years at the Department of Commerce and it is what I would hope to focus on if I am confirmed for the Federal Communications Commission.

I am pleased to be getting to know my fellow Commissioners-designate, Kathleen Abernathy and Kevin Martin. and I know we all look forward to working with Chairman Powell, Commissioner Tristani and the excellent team at the FCC to help turn our national vision, as enunciated by Congress. into reality. My pledge to you, to them, to telecom industries and telecom workers, and to all of telecom's stakeholders, is to work tirelessly and inclusively and with the best judgment I can garner to get this job done. I want to help bring to our people -- and I mean all our people -- the best, most accessible and cost-effective telecommunications system in the world. Each and every citizen of this great country should have easy access to the wonders of telecommunications, and I would hope that at the end of my term, if I am lucky enough to serve, people will say that I helped move the ball downfield toward that goal.

I value, and I enjoy, public service. As you Senators know better than I do, it is a demanding life. And upon no one do the demands fall more heavily than the members of one's own family. I am many times blessed in this regard, and very grateful to each member of my family for the support and patience and encouragement I have received over the years. My wife Beth, who I talked into marriage in 1970 only after assuring her we were moving to Washington for only a couple of years, is my nominee for the world's best partner, best friend, and best mom, too. We are the proud parents of five children, ranging in age from 29 to 13, and most of them are here with us today. They are their parents' pride and life's sweetest reward.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my brief statement. Thank you very much.