

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 3, 2008

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

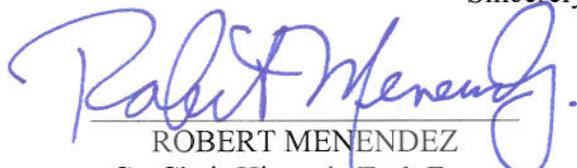
We are writing today to express our support for Commissioner Adelstein's call to open a formal investigation surrounding Arbitron's implementation of the Personal People Meter (PPM) ratings system. As Co-Chairs of the Senate Democratic Hispanic Task Force, we have serious concerns about the impact that commercialization of PPM will have on minority broadcasters. Noting that Arbitron is the primary provider of this ratings service that functions as currency for the entire broadcast industry, we are troubled by the ongoing commercialization of PPM despite being denied accreditation by the Media Ratings Council in both Philadelphia and New York.

Minority themed radio stations are providers of important news and critical information about issues that are vital to the people in our communities. Stations that broadcast into minority communities provide a window into their languages, views, and values that might otherwise be ignored. When we talk about these outlets, we're not just talking about broadcasters, we're talking about advocates—advocates our communities depend on.

Unfortunately, the PPM rollout is putting the viability of many minority radio broadcasters at risk. Radio stations serving minority groups saw precipitous drops in their ratings using PPM numbers according to Arbitron's Spring diary. In New York, for instance, La Kalle 105.9 fell from seventh using diary ratings to twenty first with PPM. In Chicago, Que Buena WOJO fell from fourth to eleventh. The Minority Media and Telecommunications Council (MMTC) predicts minority radio stations' annual revenues could decrease by as much as \$500 million, constituting the greatest loss of value in the history of minorities in broadcasting.

Given the radio industry's lack of a competitive alternative for quantitative measurement data and the fact that both Congress and the Commission itself presently rely on Arbitron's audience measurement data in the application of Commission rules, we support the Commission's action in opening a proceeding on this matter. While we support continued dialogue between the Commission and all stakeholders in the radio industry, assurance regarding the validity and reliability of Arbitron's data should be of paramount concern to the Commission and to the public. Therefore, we encourage the agency to launch a formal inquiry into the problems surrounding the implementation of PPM.

Sincerely,


ROBERT MENENDEZ
Co-Chair Hispanic Task Force


KEN SALAZAR
Co-Chair Hispanic Task Force