



October 16, 2014

The Honorable Thomas Wheeler
Chairman, Federal Communications
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

A vibrant and growing telecommunications industry is vital to America's social and economic progress, particularly in the African-American community. As historic civil rights organizations committed to diversity, we know first-hand the impact that high-speed Internet access has in expanding our communities' access to quality education, better healthcare, employment opportunities and government services. In our efforts to promote diversity in the telecom industry, we support companies and transactions that are committed to furthering the accessibility of the vital resource of high speed internet to millions of people, as well as promoting and fostering internal diversity and inclusion within all ranks, job creation and ensuring that the benefits of broadband and other technologies are available to all.

For these and many other reasons, we, the undersigned, respectfully ask the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to approve the proposed merger of AT&T and DirecTV. We believe that both the evidence and the companies' focus on expanding and enhancing the deployment of high-speed Internet access to millions of customer locations indicate why the FCC should endorse this merger. In addition, AT&T's stated commitments to diversity upon the close of the transaction in the four core areas of Personnel, Procurement, Programming, and Philanthropy, along with a stated commitment to the process of implementation and monitoring, serve as further indication that the merged entity would operate under a substantive strategic diversity plan spanning the entirety of the business.

The FCC recently stated that Americans need more competitive choices for faster and better Internet access. We wholeheartedly agree with this statement. As the Communications Workers of America, which represents more than 100,000 union employees at AT&T, [noted in a recent filing](#) endorsing the AT&T-DirecTV merger, high-speed Internet service is critically important so that Americans can "take advantage of today's new services, and... incentivize the development of tomorrow's innovations." For the African-American community in particular, the accelerated spread of cutting-edge Internet service offers tremendous empowering potential, including both employment and asset creation and ownership opportunities.

In addition, by approving the combination of a satellite television company that has no broadband with a national wireless and wireline company, the FCC would help promote the continued seamless integration of video, broadband and mobile, resulting in more than just

new choices for high-speed Internet service nationwide. It would also give millions of Americans a new option, if they choose, to bundle together these vital services at reasonable prices, as findings indicate that this transaction will not create upward pressure on pricing.

In terms of employment, we believe this merger will also clearly be in the national interest. A company cannot adequately service the interests of a community unless it takes strong and proactive steps to understand that community's specific needs. We believe that AT&T's record clearly shows that the company has done exactly that and accomplished what few other companies have made the commitment to do. The company's workforce is currently 40% people of color, and among last year's new hires, that percentage rose to nearly 50%. AT&T also spent more than \$15 billion last year with diverse suppliers, nearly 30% of its total spend. Few other companies can assert that they have proactively done as much to promote employment opportunities for the diverse community, particularly middle class jobs with benefits, than AT&T.

We have attached to this filing a letter which details AT&T's commitment re: the strategic diversity plan moving forward in the merged entity.

We believe the evidence and the company's record, as well as future impact and commitments post-merger, provide a clear and compelling basis for the FCC to determine that this merger is in the public's best interest. If approved, the combined AT&T-DirecTV will have greater incentive to deploy a state of the art Internet service and give millions of Americans a new way to access the Internet's economic, social, and civic benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Marc H. Morial

President & CEO

National Urban League

Rev. Al Sharpton

Founder & President

National Action Network

Melanie Campbell

President & CEO

National Coalition on Black Civic Participation

Cornell William Brooks

President & CEO

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