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For Immediate Release

STATEMENT OF FCC COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI
on Senate Commerce Committee Passage of Bipartisan Legislation to
Protect Joint Sales Agreements Between Television Stations

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 25, 2015— I commend the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation for passing bipartisan legislation to protect joint sales agreements (JSAs) between television stations. Under rules passed by the FCC last year on a party-line vote, JSAs that had been previously approved by the Commission would have to be unwound in 2016. The legislation approved today, by contrast, would permit television stations to maintain those JSAs. Today's vote, moreover, comes on the heels of an overwhelming, bipartisan 38-11 vote by the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee last week to deny the FCC funding to implement its new JSA policy.

These developments demonstrate that the FCC's misguided assault on JSAs is in serious trouble. Members of both parties in both chambers of Congress recognize that JSAs are pro-competitive agreements that allow broadcasters to cut costs by using the same advertising sales force. The efficiencies created by JSAs have helped broadcasters offer services that benefit consumers, especially in smaller markets. From enabling a television station in Wichita, Kansas to broadcast the only Spanish-language news in the state to allowing broadcasters in Joplin, Missouri to invest in Doppler radar technology that saved lives during a 2011 tornado, JSAs have served communities well and have promoted localism and diversity in broadcasting.

Unfortunately, the FCC's new restrictions on JSAs have already caused some stations to go off the air and other stations to carry less local news. And that disturbing trend will only accelerate if scores of existing JSAs are terminated next year. I hope the full Senate and House correct the agency's error.

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