

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL K. POWELL, CHAIRMAN

*Re: Report and Order in MM Docket No. 98-203—In the Matter of Ancillary or Supplemental Use of Digital Television Capacity by Noncommercial Licensees*

The *Report and Order* we adopt today will help bring public television into the digital age.

First, we enhance the benefits of public television by providing stations with the flexibility to fulfill their mission through innovative uses of digital technology. Public television is on the cutting edge of some of the most exciting new digital programming and I am pleased that the *Order* we adopt today supports their continued exploration of this new medium.

Second, we provide a limited but critical additional funding source that can facilitate the transition of public TV stations to digital television. These stations expect to spend about 1.7 billion dollars on the transition. So far, only 11% of them have completed the required DTV build-out. Additional revenue streams, beyond those employed today, have become essential for public television to successfully make the transition to digital television.

Third, the *Order* has established strong safeguards to insure that the fundamental nature of public broadcasting will not suffer. However, I am of the strong belief that regardless of any regulatory safeguards, public television will continue to do in the digital age what it has done so well in the past; serve the public interest by producing superb, noncommercial educational programming.