

The Free State Foundation

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News Release

CONTACT: Randolph J. May
301-984-8253 or 202-285-9926

May Argues Against Government-Funded Media *FSF President Participates in the FCC's 'Future of Media' Workshop*

POTOMAC, MD – Free State Foundation President Randolph May is participating as a panelist in today's Federal Communications Commission "Future of Media" workshop. In his prepared statement submitted to the FCC, Mr. May summarized his testimony as follows:

"Whatever the merits of government funding for public broadcasting in 1967 when Congress enacted the Public Broadcasting Act to address certain perceived media 'market failures,' today's media marketplace is characterized by an abundance and diversity of media sources. This fact calls into question the need for such continued funding. When the government funds 'public media,' inevitably a tension arises between the government's involvement in content and programming decisions and First Amendment values that are at the core of our republic."

"Indeed, apart from strict First Amendment jurisprudential considerations, when government-supported media – that is, media supported with our tax dollars -- decide what content should be filtered or amplified regarding issues of public importance, I suggest government's involvement tends to exacerbate public tensions in a way that makes civil discourse more difficult. This is because government content decisions are seen by many as tilting the public policy playing field in a way inconsistent with their beliefs. Perhaps such government involvement might be more readily tolerated if there were widespread agreement among the public that information needs exist that clearly are not being met by the private media. But in a market characterized by media abundance, such is not the case, or at least the exceptions are narrowly circumscribed. So I am opposed to expansion of funding for public broadcasting, or for 'repurposing' government funds to support other public media, such as websites. Indeed, given the unprecedented national debt (almost \$13 trillion) and competing budgetary demands facing the country, maybe this is a moment in time when reasonable people can agree that, in light of the media marketplace changes, an 'exit strategy' should be set for reducing or eliminating funding of public media."

A PDF copy of Mr. May's complete testimony is [here](#).

Randolph J. May, President of The Free State Foundation, is a former FCC Associate General Counsel and a former Chairman of the American Bar Association's Section of

Administrative Law and Regulatory Practice. Mr. May is a nationally recognized expert in communications law, Internet law and policy, and administrative law and regulatory practice. He is the author of more than 125 scholarly articles and essays on communications law and policy, administrative law, and constitutional law, including several on reform of the FCC's merger review process. He is the editor of the new book, [*New Directions in Communications Policy*](#), and he is co-editor of other two books on communications law and policy: *Net Neutrality or Net Neutering: Should Broadband Internet Services Be Regulated?* and *Communications Deregulation and FCC Reform*.

The Free State Foundation is an independent, nonpartisan, Section 501(c)(3), free market-oriented think tank.

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*P. O. Box 60680, Potomac, MD 20859
Tel. 301-984-8253 Fax: 301-299-5007
E-Mail: info@freestatefoundation.org
www.freestatefoundation.org*