

COMMENTS OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
ON S. 205, 87TH CONGRESS, A BILL TO EXPEDITE THE
UTILIZATION OF TELEVISION TRANSMISSION FACILITIES
IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, AND IN ADULT
TRAINING PROGRAMS.

S. 205 would authorize the appropriation of funds, not to exceed \$1,000,000 in any State, for establishing or improving educational television broadcasting facilities. Applications for such assistance would be made to the United States Commissioner of Education.

Applicants would be required to provide assurance satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education that necessary funds would be available to operate and maintain such facilities, that such facilities will be used only for educational purposes and that their operation will be under the control of

- (a) the agency or officer primarily responsible for the State supervision of public elementary and secondary schools;
- (b) a nonprofit foundation, corporation, or association organized primarily to engage in or encourage educational television broadcasting;
- (c) a duly constituted State educational television commission; or
- (d) a State-controlled college or university.

Under the bill, the Federal Communications Commission is authorized to provide such assistance in carrying out the provisions of the proposal as may be requested by the Commissioner of Education. The bill further specifically provides that nothing therein shall be deemed to give the Commissioner of Education any control over television broadcasting, or to amend any provision of, or requirement under, the Communications Act. The Commission is most anxious to cooperate in any program which will assist the development of educational television. As we understand this provision, it does not contemplate any change in the present responsibilities of the Commission and would in no way conflict with the Communications Act.

The Commission, aware of the need for and the potentialities of educational television, has set aside 267 television channels (both UHF and VHF) for non-commercial educational use. However, at the present time, there are only 54 such stations on the air. The Commission is cognizant of the many advantages and benefits of educational television and that it presents opportunities for schools to improve their educational systems; for advanced courses not otherwise available because of classroom and teacher shortages; for increased adult education; and that it affords outstanding teachers and lecturers an opportunity to reach enormous audiences. Educational television is a technique just beginning to make its presence felt, and the Commission is convinced that it could and should play a more significant part in American education.

The growth of educational television has to some extent been inhibited by a lack of funds. It is apparent to the Commission that there is a real need for financial assistance to educational television if it is to achieve its ultimate potential in the immediate future. However, the question of whether Federal funds should be appropriated to assist the States in establishing or improving educational stations is one of fundamental substantive policy for the judgment of Congress.

The Commission strongly endorses the objectives of S. 205, but would defer to those responsible for its administration concerning the details of the bill.

Adopted: February 23, 1961