

# FCC Takes Steps to Study

Elizabeth E. Spainhour

December 18, 2009

Topics: [FCC Matters](#)

FCC Chairman [Julius Genachowski](#) recently announced what the Commission is billing as an “agency-wide initiative to assess the state of media in these challenging economic times and make recommendations designed to ensure a vibrant media landscape.” The Chairman has appointed Steven Waldman to lead the effort. Waldman most recently served as President and Editor-in-Chief of [Beliefnet.com](#), a faith-oriented website, and was a regular columnist for the online edition of the Wall Street Journal. According to an FCC News Release, Waldman will work with FCC bureaus to “lead an open, fact-finding process to craft recommendations to meet the traditional goals of serving the public interest and making sure that all Americans receive the information, educational content, and news they seek.”

In launching this initiative, the Commission is apparently responding to requests for FCC action by the Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy and a report on the “dire circumstances” of newspapers prepared by the Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism. Chairman Genachowski declared this a “pivotal moment in the history of media and communications” because of the development of new technologies and the financial downturn. According to the Chairman, “it is important to ensure that our [policies] promote a vibrant media landscape that furthers long-standing goals of serving the information needs of communities.” However, Genachowski acknowledged that the agency must be “scrupulous” about adhering to First Amendment principles that prohibit the government from dictating content.

At this stage, it is too soon to tell the level of resources the FCC will devote to this endeavor and whether any formal action will result. It is also unclear if this effort to assess the “state of media” has any relationship to a “state of journalism” document that Commissioner Copps was reportedly circulating in July. We reported on that document [here](#). (According to news reports, Commissioner Copps’s item “examines the decline of broadcast journalism . . . and tries to explain why traditional forms of journalism have declined while other, newer forms have been on the rise.” No action has been taken on that item.)

We will update you as this initiative continues to develop.

Tags:

[FCC](#)

[FCC Matters](#)

[state of media](#)

[Steven](#)

[Waldman](#)

## BLOG ARCHIVE

## TOPICS

About This Blog  
Access to Court Dockets  
Access to Courtrooms  
Access to Search Warrants  
Anti-SLAPP Statutes  
Contact  
Cyberattack  
Data Breach  
Data Security  
Defamation  
Digital Media and Data Privacy  
Law  
Disclaimer  
Drone Law  
Fair Report Privilege  
FCC Matters  
First Amendment  
First Amendment Retaliation  
FOIA  
HIPAA  
Indecency  
Internet  
Intrusion  
Miscellaneous  
Mobile Privacy  
Newsroom Search Warrants  
Newsroom Subpoenas  
Political Advertising  
Prior Restraints  
Privacy  
Privacy Policies  
Public Records  
Reporters Privilege  
Services  
Shield Laws  
Wiretapping

## LINKS

International Association of Privacy Professionals  
National Association of Broadcasters  
North Carolina Cable  
Telecommunications Association  
North Carolina Press Association  
North Carolina Association of Broadcasters  
Radio-Television News Directors  
Association of the Carolinas  
Media Law Resource Center  
The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press  
Society of Professional Journalists  
The Journalist's Toolbox - American Press Institute  
Law Blog - WSJ.com  
Legal Blog Watch  
North Carolina Business Litigation Report