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**Testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee**  
**on Labor, Health and Human and Services and Education**  
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Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Public Broadcasting Service and my colleagues from 349 PBS stations around the country, I am grateful for the opportunity to come before you in support of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's request and to express gratitude to this committee for the appropriations that are the foundation of support for this country's only public, non-profit media institution.

I understand that this committee is faced with an almost insurmountable challenge of allocating scarce federal resources to a number of organizations, all doing worthy and important work.

I value this opportunity to share with you how PBS and its locally owned and managed stations optimize your investment in public service media.

Our mission is to use media to inform, to educate, to inspire and to engage American citizens. We do that in many ways that go well beyond just television, and that support this committee's and this nation's critical domestic priorities of school readiness, teacher training and workforce skills.

Take school readiness-

As you know, children who enter kindergarten unprepared often have tremendous difficulty. Yet many parents do not know how to help their children get ready to learn.

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, PBS administers our Ready To Learn service through local stations, distributing over one million free books and sponsoring literacy workshops for 900,000 caregivers and 7.4 million children, many of whom would not otherwise have access to such materials and training.

The impact of this program is measurable. For example, we know that parents who participated in Mississippi ETV's Ready To Learn workshops read to their children 35% more often, and read 20% longer every week.

President Bush recognized PBS' unique role in education by celebrating the Ready To Learn program at a White House event, and we are honored First Lady Laura Bush serves as the honorary chairwoman of our signature initiative to build children's literacy skills.

Mr. Chairman, I know this committee is also helping fund efforts to improve student performance by improving teacher quality. So is PBS.

Through PBS' Ready to Teach program, PBS provides online courses for teachers seeking quality professional development that is easily accessible, flexible, and tailored to local, state and national standards. Teacherline is targeted especially to teachers in schools with the highest percentage of Title I students.

But PBS does not stop with training for teachers outside the classroom. We give teachers resources to use inside the classroom as well. Every month, 1.7 million teachers go to PBS.org to download classroom materials, including more than 4,500 K-12 lesson plans, all customized to state education standards.

In Ohio for example, 264,000 students in 96 public school districts are served every year by WNEO's education services, including the station's partnership with Akron Head Start. In state school systems like Idaho, curriculum is streamed in overnight so that Idaho public schools receive over 1,300 hours of educational materials from Idaho Public Television for use in classrooms across the state.

From classrooms in California to workshops for parents in western Pennsylvania to free videos for adults earning their GEDs in Rhode Island, PBS stations are working everyday to enhance and support education in this country for children and adults of all ages.

Mr. Chairman, you are helping the nation grapple with a variety of challenges in our schools. And through our mandate as national educational television, we are a real part of the solution.

We are:

- \* The #1 choice of America's teachers for educational videos;
- \* The leading source of online lesson plans for K-12 classrooms;
- \* The top provider of distance learning coursework offered at colleges across the nation;
- \* A major resource for adults learning to read, to pass their GED, to improve their literacy for the workplace or even to speak English. More than five million adults have successfully earned their GEDs through public television's "GED Connection" program.

As you can see, we are deeply committed to education. But we are also proud to be a television enterprise, working to make a difference in what you and your family see and hear through the media. In what looks like a race to the bottom by commercial broadcasters, PBS remains a safe haven for children and adults from the vulgarity, profanity, explicit content and extreme commercialism that many observe are the hallmarks of today's media.

Consider these statistics:

- \* Incidents of violence in children's programming have increased 69% since 1998;
- \* Profanity in prime time has increased 94% since 1998;

\* Viewers now must watch 14 to 17 minutes of commercials in every hour, and if you're watching primetime on network or basic cable, you could be subjected to one hour of advertising for every two hours of actual television programming.

Public television, however, is committed to use media to serve, not to sell.

While 200,000 Americans complained to the FCC about last month's Super Bowl half-time show, 87 million American households tuned into PBS every week. We know they value the difference we bring to their homes. PBS audiences rank sixth among all national broadcasters, and ahead of any cable outlet on any given night.

Our relevance and reach begin with our award-winning television programs, winning more Emmys for news and documentaries and for children's programs than any other media enterprise. But the real impact of our programming can best be measured by what we describe as a "pyramid of delivery." For PBS and member stations, the broadcast is just the beginning of the long term value of your investment in public broadcasting.

The investment begins with top quality, distinctive programming, produced by an award winning community of station producers and independent producers. The value of this programming is then further extended with web content that attracts 300 million unique visitors a month, making PBS.org the most visited dot-org in the world. Additionally, the impact and reach is further extended through local stations' outreach activities, many carried out in partnerships with other community institutions.

Through this pyramid of delivery, PBS and its stations have a unique relevance, reach and impact, and have become the largest educational institution in this country, directly supporting our country's education priorities.

And we're doing this with a small federal investment .

While federal funding accounts for just 20% of our budget to create on-air programming, online content, lesson plans and outreach, it is precisely that funding that allows us to go out into private sector to corporations, foundations and "viewers like you" to raise the remaining funds to create these services.

As a result, we have been able to create one of the most successful public-private enterprises in this country, providing American citizens superior quality, over-the-air television for less than one dollar per citizen per year. A recent Roper survey showed that American citizens think those dollars are well spent, ranking PBS secondly only to military activities in value for their tax dollars.

But Americans are not just watching us, they trust us. That same Roper survey told us that Americans consider PBS the most trusted national institution in the country, and that they trust our news and public affairs programs more than news from any other source, including all network and cable news.

In this era of media consolidation and rapidly coarsening television content, it has never been more important to ensure that there remains one viable and vital public service media enterprise, one that belongs to the public, one that serves the public.

We are grateful for the essential support that comes from this committee, and we are deeply committed to optimizing the impact of your appropriation on behalf of your constituents and all Americans.

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