Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders Schumer, McConnell and McCarthy:

On behalf of the undersigned diversity, media and civil rights organizations, we write today to ask that you consider swift passage of the Expanding Broadcast Ownership Opportunities Act introduced by Reps. G.K. Butterfield and Steven Horsford and the Broadcast Varied Ownership Incentives for Community Expanded Service Act (Broadcast VOICES Act) introduced by Sens. Gary Peters and Robert Menendez. Supporting these pieces of legislation would eliminate barriers and create new opportunities for women, people of color and socially disadvantaged individuals to own local TV and radio stations.

From 1978 to 1995, when the diversity tax certificate was instituted, it was an effective mechanism for bringing more people of color into station ownership. During this time, broadcast ownership by people of color increased by more than 550 percent. The elimination of the diversity tax certificate in 1995 disproportionately affected that rate. According to data from 2017, women make up less than 6% of broadcast TV station owners, and people of color account for less than 3%. Similarly, women own just 7% of broadcast radio stations, and people of color own less than 3%.

In order to increase diversity within the broadcast industry, it is critical that we prioritize removing any barriers to entry for women, people of color and socially disadvantaged individuals who are pursuing ownership opportunities. The Expanding Broadcast Ownership Opportunities Act and the Broadcast VOICES Act would create those opportunities for women, communities of color, and socially disadvantaged individuals, thereby ensuring broadcaster voices are as diverse as the communities they serve. These bills amend the Communications Act of 1934 and the Internal Revenue Code to reestablish the tax certificate program. These bills allow for individuals who donate broadcast stations for the purpose of training socially disadvantaged individuals in the management and operation of broadcast stations eligible for a tax credit equal to the fair market value of the station.

The Expanding Broadcast Ownership Opportunities Act and the Broadcast VOICES Act would give women, people of color and socially disadvantaged individuals a voice and a viable
presence in the broadcast industry. We respectfully urge you to consider swift passage of these pieces of legislation. Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your leadership in ensuring that all voices are heard.

Sincerely,

[Logos and signatures]