



Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections  
Testimony on Senate Bill 389.  
February 15, 2012

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill No. 389 concerning elections and relating to voter education. Our firms are periodically retained for public affairs communications at the county and state level in both Kansas and Missouri. Those engagements frequently include paid media advertising and placement of public service announcements.

In reviewing Bill 389, in particular the provision Sec. 1 (b) (3) calling for "*25,000 television and radio public service announcements on a sufficient number of stations and sufficient times to reach the broadest possible Kansas audience*" raised questions about 1.) the appropriateness of that measurement 2.) the feasibility of the strategy and 3.) accountability for fulfilling such a requirement.

**Appropriateness of Measurement**

If the intent of this legislation is broad audience reach, "25,000 Announcements" as a unit of measure is not one we would prescribe, because it doesn't necessarily reflect actual audience delivery. In reality the number of announcements can be misleading and potentially under-deliver in terms of actual audience reach.

The more important and preferred goal is Audience Delivery which is defined and measured in terms of Impressions, Ratings For a Defined Demographic or Geographic, or Gross Rating Points for those audiences.

The latter, GRP's, is a measurement of the percentage of a defined audience reached and a factor for the frequency of message delivery. Depending on a combination of variables like the complexity of message, effectiveness of the creative execution, timing and duration of the campaign, and the call-to-action, different levels of audience delivery as measured by GRP's may be warranted.

**Feasibility of Strategy**

Audience Delivery is dependent on station listenership/viewership, audience demographics, the day parts selected and specific programming. Controlling all those factors necessary to ensure audience delivery is possible only with paid media as a part of the negotiating and buying process. Matching public service weights are commonly part of that process. But unless these audience factors are actively managed, the actual audience delivery is uncertain and the number of announcements is mostly irrelevant.

We can only guarantee paid-for announcements and to a lesser extent the earned matching weights as part of a negotiated and paid package.

Public service announcements are placed at the stations' discretion and, only when there is time in inventory, if at all. Not surprisingly, available inventory is typically available in poorer rated programming where demand and audiences are sagging. These supply pressures can be further magnified during election cycles when demand is high.

An unintended consequence of the 25000 announcement goal is that to achieve such a level might require placement with stations and programming with smaller audiences and/or lower rated programming.

Consequently, it has been our experience that favorable public service placement is possible when leveraged by a corresponding paid schedule. Depending on the overall spending, and the station or network's inventory at the time of negotiation, station management might find sufficient incentive to "match" PSA's to a paid schedule.

Without that leverage, it is difficult to surmise how a purely public service voter education campaign could satisfy the requirements.

We would respectfully suggest that further consideration also be given to the timing of announcements paid or otherwise. If, for example, the announcement reminds voters to take their picture identification to the polls, the effectiveness of that reminder might be greatest closer to the election date and caution given to diluting resources with a premature schedule start.

### **Accountability**

Stations do not provide an accounting for PSA's so there could be no verification. Even matching weight commercials as part of a paid schedule are subject to preemption.

Our firms would be hesitant to commit to the objective cited in Sec. 1(a)(3) uncertain of our ability to meet the 25,000 announcement requirement, that it would achieve the desired audience delivery, or that performance could be documented or verified.

Respectfully,

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