

ALL ABOUT THE PUBLIC BROADCASTING ACT

Carnegie Commission

- In 1965, the Carnegie Corporation, led by John Gardner (who later went on to found Common Cause), formed a commission to study the state of public television.
- The Commission's 1967 report, titled *Public Television: A Program for Action*, concluded that a "well-financed and well-directed educational television system... must be brought into being if the full needs of the American public are to be served."
- The Carnegie Commission recommended the creation of a Corporation for Public Television as a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization **without operational authority**.
- The Corporation would receive and disburse public and private funds to public broadcasters, as well as promote development of programming and technology.

1967: LBJ Signs the Public Broadcasting Act Into Law

"...It will be **carefully guarded** from Government or from party control. It will be free, and it will be independent – and it will belong to all of our people...If public television is to fulfill our hopes, then **the Corporation must be long on enlightened leadership...**

So today we rededicate a part of the airwaves – which belong to all the people – and we dedicate them for the enlightenment of all the people."

- President Lyndon B. Johnson, upon signing the Public Broadcasting Act

The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 incorporates many of the Carnegie Commission's recommendations, including the following provisions:

- The government should create the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) as a nonprofit organization without political affiliation.
- The CPB is tasked with facilitating "the development of public telecommunications and to afford maximum protection from extraneous interference and control."
- The CPB and its members should be selected without political qualification and should not contribute or support any political party or electoral candidate; public broadcasting stations also should not support or oppose any political candidate.
- The CPB should ensure that the financial needs of stations are met with relation to their particular communities and audiences.
- No part of the United States government should have control or supervision over public telecommunications, its programs, services, and content, or the CPB itself, which should remain a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization.
- The CPB should support and encourage the development of public telecommunications programming with regard to **diversity of source and "objectivity and balance."**
- The CPB should perform its duties while refraining from **interfering with program content**.
- The CPB should perform **solely an advisory role**, and should not exercise any control over daily station operations.
- According to the Public Telecommunications Act of 1992, the Corporation should provide **reasonable opportunity for the public to comment** on the "quality, diversity, creativity, excellence, innovation, objectivity, and balance of public broadcasting services...of a controversial nature."