



Senator Feinstein Urges Removal of Public Broadcast Chairman  
June 21, 2005

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and 14 other Senators today urged the removal of Kenneth Tomlinson from his post as Chairman of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for actively undermining the credibility of public broadcasting.

**“The Corporation for Public Broadcasting exists – to ensure independence and freedom from political influence. Its mission is to protect public broadcasting from political persuasions of either side. Yet today, we are seeing the exact opposite. Mr. Tomlinson’s actions appear to not just ignore the mission of CPB, but to blatantly contradict it,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“What appears to be happening is really a kind of political jaundicing of public broadcasting and I think that is wrong.”**

**“Press reports have highlighted a pattern of political activities that have been advanced under Mr. Tomlinson’s leadership. Allegations about diverting tax payer monies to Republican lobbyists and consultants to monitor content under the guise of trying to make the programming more ‘balanced.’ We all know that what is needed to create balance is subjective. There are allegations from all sides of the political spectrum that the media is too liberal or too conservative.**

**In addition, when the House sought to cut the Corporation’s budget by nearly \$200 million, Mr. Tomlinson did not rise to publicly fight the cut. This is astounding. I don’t know any CEO or Chairman of the Board who wouldn’t stand up and fight for its dollars needed to support its budget.**

**Our public broadcast stations enjoy broad support from the American people – 80%. And they play a vital role in educating the public, especially our children. I dare say the approval rating of Elmo far outshines the approval rating of Congress or the Administration.**

**We should be doing all we can to support the mission of public broadcasting and strengthen its financial standing – not undermining it. I join my colleagues in asking Mr. Tomlinson to step down as Chair. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting deserves a chair who will be its staunch advocate and fight for financial security and programming independence – not an advocate for politics as usual.”**

**The following is a letter sent to the President by Senators Schumer, Feinstein, Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), Jon Corzine (D-NJ), Bill Nelson (D-FL), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Tom Harkin (D-IA), Joseph Biden (D-DE), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA):**

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to call for the removal of the Chairman of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Kenneth Tomlinson. We strongly disagree with your Administration's decision to appoint an individual to head a not-for-profit corporation such as public broadcasting who is actively undermining, under-funding, and ultimately undoing its mission.

We believe that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), in particular the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) is an invaluable resource for our TV-watching public. Since Congress created this not-for-profit entity in 1967, it has become one of the most relied upon sources of news and educational programs for all Americans, and especially children.

PBS is among the most balanced sources of news and other programming that can be found on television today. Most of its member stations have moved into the digital age, offering quality programming in High Definition; and it can still be watched over the airwaves, without subscribing to special satellite services or cable companies.

Mr. Tomlinson hid polls from the public that show that public support for PBS is in the stratosphere – 80 percent of Americans believe that public television is “fair and balanced.” He has taken a political agenda into his Chairman's office, suggesting that PBS is not balanced; spending unnecessary funds to investigate individual news programs for bias; adjusting programming to cut news programs because of perceived bias; and hiring expensive lobbyists to strategize about how to encourage senators to oppose a bill that would have allowed individual public television stations to have more representations on the board of the CPB.

Mr. Tomlinson is now placing the impartiality of the CPB in question by nominating Patricia Harrison to be the new CPB President—she is a former co-chair of the Republican National Committee.

Moreover, the Republican leadership in the House has sought to cut nearly \$200 million for CPB's budget. In particular, they cut PBS's “Ready to Learn” shows such as Reading Rainbow and Sesame Street by \$23 million in the House Appropriations Committee. Mr. Tomlinson didn't even speak out publicly against this drastic cut to public television's budget.

Public television is a valuable resource for all Americans and it should not be undermined by appointed leadership that has a political agenda. We urge you to immediately replace Mr. Tomlinson with an executive who takes his or her responsibility to the public television system seriously, not one who so seriously undermines the credibility and mission of public television. Thank you for your time and consideration.”