United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 21, 2005

President George W. Bush
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

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.

Sincerely,