



Texas Association of Broadcasters



Texas Association of Broadcasters
2015-2016 report to **stakeholders**

legislative
advocacy

direct
member
services



WWW.TAB.ORG

- MEMBER DIRECTORIES
- JOB BANK (FREE JOB POSTINGS!)
- LEGAL FAQ & GUIDES
- MOBILE APPS FOR TAB EVENTS
- INDUSTRY NEWS & EVENTS
- BROADCAST CALENDAR
- EAS PLANS
- *TABULLETIN* WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



Protecting Newsrooms

KEEPING NEWSROOMS OUT OF THE COURTROOM

TAB has proven itself time and again as the chief defender of Texas' broadcast newsrooms. A major victory in 2015 included legislative adoption of a provision overturning a disastrous state Supreme Court ruling that stifled reporting of third-party allegations.

This win expanded the body of newsroom protections previously secured by TAB and key allies that bolster the newsroom legal toolbox and save stations huge sums in legal expenses each year. These include:

- Interlocutory appeal statute
- Free Flow of information Act (reporter shield)
- Citizen Participation Act (anti-SLAPP)
- Defamation Mitigation act (uniform corrections and retractions)

ENSURING GOVERNMENTAL TRANSPARENCY

TAB is the primary defender of Texas' Open Government laws and fights to keep governmental information public and governmental meetings open, not just because it's the right thing to do, but also to protect stations from costly legal battles and help newsrooms perform their valuable watchdog role in our society.

Key victories in the 2015 session:

- Preserved the availability to newsrooms of motor vehicle accident reports and criminal history information
- Opened private university police department records to the public
- Defeated dozens of bills that would have weakened the Texas Public Information Act

Advancing Sound Tax Policy

TAB SECURED TWO KEY TAX BREAKS IN THE 2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION THAT BRING GREATER EQUITY TO STATE TAX POLICY AND CONSIDERABLE SAVINGS TO STATIONS.

Radio broadcasters no longer have to pay sales tax on new or replacement digital transmission equipment, a savings of as much as \$10,000 for some stations making the move for the first time.

Beginning in 2018, TV stations and content providers will have a clear franchise tax exemption for certain revenues generated out of state.

Both provisions build on an extensive body of tax policy that TAB has secured to ensure broadcasters receive the same kind of exemptions that other industries receive, including those for production equipment, electricity and similar key business inputs as explained in TAB's State Tax Guide.

Because these policies are always vulnerable to bureaucratic missteps, TAB monitors the Comptroller's activities daily to ensure broadcasters benefit fully from lawmakers' intent.

TAB's most valuable tax policy is what is NOT found on the law books: an Ad Tax, which TAB has defeated numerous times throughout the past 30 years thanks to unyielding vigilance and active engagement with lawmakers.



DC LEADERSHIP

TAB continues to play a significant role in federal policymaking thanks in part to our long-term efforts to strengthen relationships between local broadcasters and the state's congressional delegation.

Music Royalties

TAB continues to fight a Performance Tax on local radio stations and has secured more co-sponsors than any other state of the Anti-Performance Tax resolution co-authored by two Texans – Reps. Michael Conaway, R-Midland, and Gene Green, D-Houston.

Exclusivity Rules

TAB's 2015 arguments against the FCC chairman's proposal to repeal exclusivity rules that provide the basis for broadcast localism served as a powerful and effective tool that NAB and major TV groups used to secure Congressional support.

AM Revitalization

TAB took the lead in responding to FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai's 2012 call for revitalizing the AM band, offering multiple strategies for the effort. When the effort stalled in 2015, TAB secured support from Reps. Pete Olson, R-Sugar Land, and Gene Green, D-Houston, to prod the FCC into adopting the effort now underway.

Spectrum Auction

Since helping defeat the most serious threat ever to TV stations' retransmission consent revenue in 2014, TAB has engaged in efforts to ensure the FCC respects key spectrum auction protections for viewers and stations adopted by Congress.

Deductibility of Ad Costs

TAB continues to engage the Texas congressional delegation to resist multinational companies' efforts to reduce businesses' 100% tax deduction for advertising expenses to 50%, with the rest to be amortized over five or 10 years.

DIRECT MEMBER SERVICES

Stations' support of TAB's NCSA/Public Education Program, established in 1994, allows TAB to offer a wide range of direct services to stations in addition to the invaluable legislative representation in Austin and DC. The NCSA program helps government and non-profit entities deliver important public education messages to the entire state for a nominal fee, generating revenues that make the following services possible.

Alternative Broadcast Inspections

TAB initiated [this program](#) in 1997 through a unique partnership with the FCC. One of our team of five ABIP inspectors reviews stations for compliance with FCC regulations and advises stations on corrections needed to achieve compliance. Successful inspections, which are voluntary and partly underwritten by TAB, garner participating stations a three-year waiver from routine, surprise FCC inspections. With FCC fines starting in excess of \$4,000, this program is inexpensive "peace of mind" insurance for Texas stations!

Legal Hotline, Guides, Political Updates

TV and radio GMs and key staff routinely turn to TAB for free legal help on topics ranging from interpretation of FCC regulations and advertising copy questions, to tax concerns and newsroom issues. TAB retains top law firms in Austin, Dallas, Houston and DC to secure answers to routine questions and saving stations thousands in legal costs. Members also have 24/7 online access to a wide range of [legal guides and answers to frequently asked questions](#) online. During election years, TAB's "Political Update" emails keep station managers, sales staff and newsrooms informed of developments in Texas' political landscape that could impact broadcast political advertising and candidate news coverage.

Training Programs

Stations save thousands of dollars and make many times that through [TAB's free online training services](#) and affordable in-person workshops. From Sales 101 to management and political topics, members have great resources for every member of their staff.

Newsroom Programs

TAB focuses on technological innovations, newsgathering mechanics, ethical decision-making and storytelling essentials with its annual Southwest Broadcast Newsroom Workshop. In 2015, TAB set a new record for professional and student attendance at the event – a reflection of the quality and quantity of the newsroom training sessions provided at the workshop. With stations expanding their news programs but internal training resources dwindling, each newsroom workshop features training from local, state and national journalists.

Employee Recruitment

Complying with the FCC's EEO rules and finding qualified employees can be complicated and time-consuming. TAB helps stations simplify the process with its [online Job Bank](#), career expos and [Broadcast1Source.com](#), a web-based program that helps stations with EEO recordkeeping required by the FCC.

Public Service, \$4.98 Billion and Counting!

Radio and Television broadcasters' localism is our strongest asset in the increasingly competitive media marketplace and in TAB's legislative advocacy. No industry does more to advance Texas communities. TAB's annual public service research project documents broadcasters' extraordinary efforts and reports aggregate numbers to lawmakers and regulators in Austin and DC. In the past 16 years, TAB has documented more than \$4.98 billion in public service to their communities – and that's with an average of only 18% of stations responding!

Annual Convention & Trade Show

A "mini-NAB Vegas" brings sales, technology and legal experts to Austin. Attracting more than 1,200 delegates and featuring 120+ exhibit booths, the event is the go-to program for owners, managers, sales teams and engineers. It's a fast-paced, hard-working day and a half in Central Texas with fees of only \$65 to \$160/person! [Mark your calendar for the next few years, all at the Renaissance Austin.](#)
[Hotel: August 10-11, 2016 & August 9-10, 2017.](#)



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Ann Arnold Center
502 E. 11th St., Ste. 200
Austin, Texas 78701
512-322-9944 ph
512-322-0522 fax
www.tab.org