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For Immediate Release



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**MEDIA ACCESS PROJECT REACTS TO MCDOWELL ANNOUNCEMENT  
REGARDING AT&T/BELLSOUTH MERGER**

Andrew Jay Schwartzman, President of Media Access Project, issued the following statement concerning the announcement that FCC Commissioner Robert McDowell has declined to vote on the proposed ATT/BellSouth merger:

"FCC Commissioner McDowell has courageously elevated professional responsibility over expedience in declining to participate in deliberations about the ATT/BellSouth merger. The test for such decisions is whether an action diminishes public confidence in the FCC's actions. There is no doubt that the legitimacy of all FCC decision making would have suffered had Commissioner McDowell yielded to pressure and agreed to vote on the merger."

"FCC Chairman Martin's handling of the matter was uncharacteristically shortsighted; it appears that he was willing to sacrifice the FCC's reputation just to gain a little leverage in one regulatory decision. But Commissioner McDowell's recusal is far more important than its effect on the outcome of this case. A year or two from now, no one will remember which conditions were or were not imposed on ATT, but no one will have forgotten that Chairman Martin tried to force Commissioner McDowell to cross an ethical minefield."

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