Dear Senator _____:

As president of EDUCAUSE, a higher education association of over 1900 colleges and universities, I urge you to sign the Lott-Hollings letter to the FCC Commissioners in support of the preservation of the Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS). This critical educational resource effectively serves millions of students of all ages throughout the country.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is currently in the midst of a rulemaking process principally intended to update outdated technical rules to allow ITFS to provide a range of new broadband services. While EDUCAUSE supports the new technical rules, we are strongly opposed to FCC proposals to allow commercial ownership in the ITFS band. Should this proposal become a reality, the education community will lose control of and access to this valuable shared resource.

ITFS has been successfully executing its educational mission since its inception in the 1960s, making extensive use of the spectrum to allow educators to provide services such as distance learning, videoconference capability and professional development programs. The EDUCAUSE mission is to improve education through the use of innovation technology. Increasingly this means migrating traditional distance services such as television programming onto the Internet and into an interactive format. Many of our campuses have very sophisticated wireless Internet access systems in place and are reaching out to their surrounding communities to provide access as well. We see this as the next step in providing affordable education to rural and traditionally underserved populations. Rule changes which will allow the ITFS spectrum to be used for broadband access will facilitate this. Now is not the time to divest the spectrum set aside for educational purposes back into the commercial market.

We urge you to oppose efforts at the FCC that will result in the loss of spectrum set aside for our nation’s teachers and students and join Sen. Lott and Sen. Hollings in signing the letter opposing the commercialization of the ITFS. For more information, please contact Jessica Korf or Leslie Harris at 202-478-6301. To sign the letter, contact either James Assey (224-9180) with Sen. Hollings or Steven Wall (224-6253) with Sen. Lott. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian L. Hawkins
President