

**Where Were the States?:
American Federalism and Educational Broadcasting since 1945**

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Abstract

What the American public knows today as public broadcasting began as educational radio and television, and those were the dominant terms until 1967. While the modern architecture of public broadcasting obscures the role of states, even where there are operating state networks in public media, the earlier history of educational broadcasting shows how contingent that outcome was. Archival records demonstrate several mostly failed efforts to organize state-level educational television networks in the 1950s and early 1960s. What eventually emerged in states was a haphazard set of individual stations in many states such as California and Arizona, state agencies overseeing some or all public media in others (e.g., Alabama, New Jersey, South Carolina, Wisconsin), and a university-sponsored state network in North Carolina. Federal educational broadcasting policy was putatively agnostic about the existence of states, let alone their authority over education, and this omission shaped a postwar history of frequent failure preceding the emergence of today's public media networks. The submerged history of federalism in broadcasting policy implies a much more contingent nature of federalism in education politics, even in the era where K-12 education policy debates were full of prickliness around federal power.

Keywords: education policy, out-of-school learning, educational technology, educational broadcasting, history and historiography, federalism, federal education policy

Where Were the States?

American Federalism and Educational Broadcasting since 1945

In fall 1954, a debate raged in Wisconsin over educational television – what today we call public television. In 1953, the legislature had put an advisory question on the ballot for the following fall: “Shall the state of Wisconsin provide a tax-supported state-wide noncommercial educational television network?” In 1952, the state had been granted 12 local educational television channels in an order by the Federal Communications Commission to reserve channels across the country for noncommercial purposes. The Wisconsin Citizens Committee for Educational Television (WCCET) had organized shortly after that FCC order, and its lobbying led to the legislature punting the issue to a public referendum. The WCCET and its allies observed that a television network was the logical extension to the FM radio network just created by the state, and they argued that a network would provide an invaluable service to the state, especially rural areas, where the University of Wisconsin could provide programming for schools, farmers, and families. In opposition, the state Republican party and some commercial broadcasters argued that taxpayers should not be paying for a government propaganda outfit.¹ The result was not close. While 308,385 voters approved of taxes for a state television network, almost 700,000 voted against a tax-supported network. Only one county had voters in favor: Dane, home of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where WHA-TV had just started broadcasting.² For the following decade, the advocates for a statewide network had to make due with a single station licensed to the state’s flagship university.

¹ For the record of the campaign, see the papers of the Wisconsin Citizens Committee for Educational Television, Wisconsin Historical Society, Mss 209, and the details later in this paper.

² M. G. Toepel and Hazel L. Kuehn, eds., *The Wisconsin Blue Book* (State of Wisconsin, 1954), p. 764. <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/WI.WIBlueBk1956>

North Carolina had an identical outcome for advocates of educational television, but it followed a different path. In December 1954, the North Carolina Educational Radio and Television Commission recommended that the state *not* create a statewide network but instead support a single television station run by the University of North Carolina.³ As in Wisconsin, only the flagship university operated an educational television station for the next decade, and in the two states, only the regions near Madison, Wisconsin, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, had access to the programming on either station. Both Wisconsin and North Carolina eventually built state networks through public agencies, but that was neither an easy task nor guaranteed in the mid-1950s. Many other states had similar outcomes in the 1950s: floundering advocacy for a state network, with an outcome of one or two stations by the end of the decade.

The 1952 reservation of television channels for educational, noncommercial uses was a surprising and huge win for advocates of educational broadcasting, but the FCC order was followed by years of extraordinary difficulty in translating a regulatory win into operational, sustainable stations. Ten years after the FCC order that made educational television possible, there were dozens of educational television stations in the country, most of whom struggled to stay on the air and broadcast programming of any quality. At the time of a meeting to discuss the constant financial emergencies of stations, in late 1964, there was no prospect on the horizon of what would emerge by the end of the decade: a national network of public television stations with two educational programs for young children as anchor programs.⁴

3 North Carolina Educational Radio and Television Commission. "Report of the North Carolina Educational Radio and Television Commission," December 10, 1954. University of North Carolina Television Network Records (40258), box 10, folder 257. University of North Carolina University Archives.

4 The Washington Conference on Long-Range Financing was a meeting sponsored by the National Association of Educational Broadcasters in December 1964 that included addresses by then-FCC chair E. William Henry, among others, and correspondence and meetings in the following year led to the creation of the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television and, eventually, the proposal that became the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967.

Why Broadcasting Matters to the History of Education

This failure to launch educational television in the 1950s provides an opportunity to explore the history of educational politics in a unique arena, one where the federal government has primacy. In broadcasting, unlike in brick-and-mortar schooling, the federal government reigns supreme. Since the Radio Act of 1912, Congress has asserted that the federal government owns the airwaves, and in succession created the Federal Radio Commission in 1927 and the Federal Communications Commission in 1934. Until 1945, federal regulation of radio was in effect a disaster for educational broadcasters: while universities were key innovators in broadcast radio, the rise of commercial radio networks in 1927 and the Depression killed the majority of AM stations operated by colleges and universities. Through the end of World War II, the survivors in educational radio were commonly midwestern (typically land-grant) colleges and universities broadcasting in daytime and serving a variety of roles for regional communities.⁵

Two decisions by the FCC opened up opportunities for educational broadcasters in the immediate postwar era. In 1945, the FCC moved the broadcast spectrum for FM radio to its current location on the radio dial and reserved all frequencies below 92 MHz for educational (noncommercial) stations. Seven years later, as parts of its allocation of all television stations in the country, the FCC reserved 242 local television channels for educational purposes. Education was critical in this regulatory change, especially national higher education organizations that funded a coherent lobbying effort in the television allocation hearings.⁶ Federal law and regulatory bodies thus circumscribed and lay the groundwork for educational activities in radio

⁵ Hugh Slotten, *Radio's Hidden Voice: The Origins of Public Broadcasting in the United States* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

⁶ Allison Perlman, *Public Interests: Media Advocacy and Struggles over U.S. Television* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016).

and television. Seeing the federal government as central is not the usual way of thinking about educational politics in the United States, but it is the appropriate context in broadcasting.

How could we understand the role of federal education policy differently if we could rewrite the historiography of federalism in education, using the history of educational broadcasting? This question is implied by the AERA annual meeting theme of “Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century.” More specifically, it is a variant of one of the key questions offered explicitly in the meeting’s call: “What political or economic forces encourage or prevent [equitable] changes?” We know that the trajectory of federal education policy after WW2 was shaped by the “three political Rs” of race, religion, and Reds, and then civil rights politics, and then the rhetoric of human capital and economic competition – and that at each step, Congressional leaders and presidents have waltzed around the politics of federalism in different ways.

But much of what we know is dictated by a focus on schools rather than education more broadly. With a few exceptions such as Victoria Cain, historians of education have generally shied away from the implications of Larry Cremin when he called television one of the key “educative institutions” of 20th century American childhood. Cremin meant to fold television and all media into his vision of the American Paideia, but there are other issues at stake.⁷ Since the Radio Act of 1912, Congress has asserted federal authority over the electromagnetic spectrum, including the authority to regulate broadcasting. And that assertion changed the political landscape for education, though historians and others have not paid sufficient attention. To wit,

⁷ Victoria Cain, “From Sesame Street to Prime Time School Television: Educational Media in the Wake of the Coleman Report,” *History of Education Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2017): 590-601; Cain, *Schools and Screens: A Watchful History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021); Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988); Jurgen Herbst, “Cremin’s American Paideia,” *The American Scholar* 60, no. 1 (1991): 128-140.

how has the political history of education evolved in an arena where the federal government has literally owned the pipeline?

This paper uses the federal authority over the airwaves to explore the historical nature of federalism in education. The key question: how do the politics of federal education debates look different when we include broadcasting and especially television as an essential part of 20th century education history? There are several reasons why broadcasting belongs in the history of education. In addition to the emergence of radio and television as a significant presence in childhood in the twentieth century, public broadcasting's origins are deeply intertwined with educational institutions, especially in higher education. Shepperd and Slotten have documented the importance of colleges and universities in the early era of radio experimentation as well as what was considered educational radio in the 1930s and 1940s.⁸ Critically, several national education organizations sponsored the Joint Committee on Educational Television in the early 1950s to lobby (successfully) for the reservation of several hundred television channels across the country for educational, noncommercial stations. In several ways, educational broadcasting earned its name long before *public broadcasting* emerged as a dominant expression in the 1960s.

This project lies at the intersection of several historical literatures: the histories of television and public media, federalism in education policy, and education ideologies and politics. The historiography of television and public media includes Cremin's discussion of newspapers, television, and other mass media as part of his educational constellations; but it also includes Cuban's analysis of television as a technology used *within* schools, and both Morrow's

⁸ Josh Shepperd, "Electric Education: How the Media Reform Movement Built Public Broadcasting in the United States, 1934-1952" (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin - Madison, 2013). <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1761835841/abstract/765028B9F5B1424APQ/1>; Slotten, *Radio's Hidden Voice*.

and Perlman's histories of television reform efforts, much of which focused on concerns about children and families. The historiography of federalism in education policy includes Green's recent scholarship on the contingency of federal education policy in Reconstruction as well as the voluminous literature on post-WW2 federal education policy. The politics of education also intersects with television. Cain's recent scholarship focuses on how television helped reinforce the nationalization of the education gospel ideology, and Perlman has pointed out that the creation of state education networks in the South, such as Alabama's, was used in service to make arguments against the need for desegregation: that is, all children could learn from the same high-quality programming in their own homes, separated by race. At the intersection of the three lies the subject of this paper, which has thus far received no scholarly attention.⁹

Sources

This paper relies on the records of national public agencies and private (non-profit) organizations as well as selected state-level records. We focus on material from the collected

⁹ Cremin, *American Education*; Larry Cuban, *Teachers and Machines: The Classroom Use of Technology since 1920* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1986); Robert W. Morrow, *"Sesame Street" and the Reform of Children's Television* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Perlman, *Public Interests*; Hilary Green, *Educational Reconstruction: African American Schools in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016); Gareth Davies, *See Government Grow: Educational Politics from Johnson to Reagan* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007); Matthew F. Delmont, *Why Busing Failed: Race, Media, and the National Resistance to School Desegregation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016); Hugh Davis Graham, *The Uncertain Triumph: Federal Education Policy in the Kennedy and Johnson Years* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press); Carl Kaestle (ed.), *To Educate a Nation: Federal and National Strategies of School Reform* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007); Adam Nelson, *The Elusive Ideal: Equal Educational Opportunity and the Federal Role in Boston's Public Schools, 1950-1985* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); Douglas Reed, *Building the Federal Schoolhouse: Localism and the American Education State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Guadalupe San Migule, *Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the United States, 1960-2001* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2004); Joel H. Spring, *The Sorting Machine Revisited: National Educational Policy since 1945* (London: Longman, 1989); Wayne J. Urban, *More than Science and Sputnik: The National Defense Education Act of 1958* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010); Maris Vinovskis, *From A Nation at Risk to No Child Left Behind: National Education Goals and the Creation of Federal Education Policy* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2009); Cain, *Screens and Schools*.

papers of several chairs of the Federal Communications Commission (primarily Newton Minow and E. William Henry), the Ford Foundation and its Fund for Adult Education, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, the Joint Committee on Educational Television, and National Educational Television (the non-profit private predecessor of the Public Broadcasting System). We thank the archivists at the Wisconsin Historical Society, the University of Maryland College Park, Columbia University, Ohio State University, the University of North Carolina, and the Rockefeller Archive Center, where these collections are stored.¹⁰

Triumphant in Lobbying, Trailing in Capacity

As the survivors of the prewar educational radio scene were beginning to see glimmers of hope in the 1940s, as well as forge alliances, they began to see the possibility and need not just for individual broadcasting FM stations but moreso for regional networks of stations. They had the living model of networks in terms of commercial AM radio, the industry beasts that had helped destroy most of the first generation of educational radio stations, but nonetheless a sustainable creator of programming that could reach large populations. They also had a technical need as the FCC reserved FM frequencies – but only FM channels – for noncommercial educational purposes. The FM band is at a higher frequency than AM, requires more power to broadcast, and generally had a smaller receiving footprint in any community.¹¹ To reach the

¹⁰ The archivists by institution—Ohio State University: Michelle Drobik, Kevlin Haire; University of Maryland: Michael Henry, Laura Schnitker, James M. Baxter; University of North Carolina: Taylor Kaye de Klerk, Aaron Smithers; Wisconsin Historical Society: Cynthia Bacchuber, Jennifer Barth, Alison Bridger, Lee Grady, Emil Hoelter, Sally Jacobs, Tim Ream, Lisa Saywell, Joseph Taylor; Rockefeller Archives Center: Lee R. Hiltzik.

¹¹ The FCC had granted the desires of educational radio advocates, but at a higher cost of operating stations. The same dynamic would recur in television channel allocations, as UHF channels are at a higher frequency than the VHF channels mostly reserved for commercial network broadcasts, and thus require greater power for clear broadcasting.

same population that a single AM station could broadcast to, one would need multiple distributed FM transmitters.

This urgent need for multiple transmitters became an argument for state radio networks. Because the surviving educational radio stations were predominantly licensed to public colleges and universities, the presumed political support for building out a network was at the state level. Wisconsin became the paradigm, as the University of Wisconsin founded a small FM network based on its longtime experience operating an AM station, WHA.¹² As Ohio State University considered its own plans for FM broadcasting, its leadership and faculty consulted with state leaders and other in-state educators.¹³ North Carolina's educational radio commission in the late 1940s saw Wisconsin as a model in its discussions as well.¹⁴ By the end of the 1940s, it became apparent to educational broadcasting advocates that those arguments for state networks were evanescent: there simply were not many proposals to the FCC to build FM stations, even one by one.¹⁵ Educational broadcasters also had turned to another issue: the fight to reserve television channels for education. As the FCC announced the beginning of television channel allocation hearings, attention and time and money shifted to the new arena. But several key issues carried over from the discussions of FM educational radio, including the idea of building station networks at the state level.

12 E.g., Howard L. Bevis, "Report of NASU Committee of Radio Broadcasting 1948," Howard Landis Bevis Papers, RG 3.H, box UA.RG3.H.0024, folder 8, Ohio State University, University Archives.

13 E.g., Kenneth C. Ray to "Ohio FM Radio State Committee," December 12, 1944, in Bevis Papers, box UA.RG3.H.0027, folder 11.

14 W. H. Plemmons, "Final Report and Recommendation of the Non-Technical Sub-Committee of the North Carolina FM Radio Education Committee," July 1948, Department of Radio, Television, and Motion Pictures of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records, 1928-1980 (40086) (hereafter DRTMP), box 15, "FM Radio Education Committee, 1948-1950" folder, University of North Carolina University Archives.

15 E.g., National Association of State Universities. "Report of the Committee on Radio Broadcasting, National Association of State Universities," 1949, I. Keith Tyler papers, RG40.62, box UA.RG40.62.0007, "NASU Committee on Radio Broadcasting - reports, 1943-1955" folder, Ohio State University, University Archives.

The developments in FM radio were quickly superceded by developments in television. In 1949, the Federal Communications Commission announced hearings on the allocation of television channels, as part of its postwar process of setting technical standards for television broadcasting and unwinding wartime restrictions on station construction. Educational advocates responded quickly, including key figures in higher education such as Ohio State University President Howard Bevis, who had testified in front of the FCC twice earlier in the decade – he was representing both the Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities and the National Association of State Universities.¹⁶ Over the following three years, a broad national coalition fought for reservation of television channels for noncommercial educational uses—national associations such as the American Council for Education and the National Education Association, who helped fund the lobbying effort, and educational broadcasting professionals and advocates, under the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB) and then, for the most critical part of the FCC hearing process, in the guise of a new organization, the Joint Committee on Educational Television.¹⁷

As with the FM band, the Federal Communications Commission provided a significant if partial victory for educational broadcasting in television. In its April 1952 order, the FCC allocated hundreds of television channels across the country in both Very High Frequency (VHF)

16 E.g., Howard L. Bevis, “Notice of Appearance and Comments on Behalf of the Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities,” August 26, 1949, Howard Landis Bevis Papers, RG 3.H, box UA.RG3.H.0027, folder 15, Ohio State University, University Archives; Marcus Cohn to I. Keith Tyler, August 30, 1949. I. Keith Tyler papers, RG40.62, box UA.RG40.62.0005, “JCET Allocation Hearings, 1948-49” folder, Ohio State University, University Archives; J. L. Morrill to Wayne Coy, August 24, 1949. Bevis Papers, box UA.RG3.H.0027, folder 15; Russell I. Thackrey to Bevis, August 25, 1949. Bevis Papers, box UA.RG3.H.0027, folder 15; Tyler to Bevis, August 31, 1949, Bevis Papers, box UA.RG3.H.0027, folder 15. Bevis also loaned Tyler’s time to the Joint Committee on Educational Television in late 1950, during the crucial effort to build the foundational case for channel reservations.

17 The story is summarized well in Perlman, *Public Interests*.

and Ultra High Frequency (UHF) bands. For education, it reserved 242 channels, each one identified in individual regions and by station number and frequency. In some areas, such as Madison, Wisconsin, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the FCC reserved a VHF channel for education – these were channels that existing television sets could easily receive, and were less expensive in transmission costs than UHF channels. In the majority of locations, however, the FCC granted only commercial channels in the VHF band and identified its educational channel designation in the UHF band.

In addition, as with the FM band decision in 1945, the reservation of a radio frequency or television channel did not guarantee an operating station in a city or town. Some operating authority would need to follow up with a construction permit application, demonstrating financial, engineering, and other operational capacity to build and then run a television station. During the lobbying effort in 1950 and 1951, the organizational work of the Joint Committee on Educational Television had in essence created a database of potential broadcasting licensees, by soliciting and assisting school districts, colleges, and universities in drafting and submitting statements to the FCC. In 1952, staff of the American Council on Education followed up by assessing the potential for construction-permit applications in dozens of cities.¹⁸ The new Ford Foundation Fund for Adult Education created a matching-grant program to assist in station construction, and slowly, the first transmissions of educational television stations began, with 20 noncommercial stations on the air by the end of 1955.¹⁹

18 E.g., American Council on Education. “Educational Television Station Assessment Report: Boston,” 1952, in National Educational Television (NET) records, Series 5A, Box 40, Wisconsin Historical Society; “Educational Television Station Assessment Report: Chapel Hill,” 1952, NET records, Series 5A, Box 196; “Educational Television Station Assessment Report: Phoenix,” NET records, Series 5A, Box 2; “Educational Television Station Assessment Report: Pittsburgh,” NET records, Series 5A, Box 73.

19 Elizabeth Risser, “Wisconsin Citizen’s Committee for Educational TV Progress Report,” January 23, 1956, Wisconsin Citizens Committee for Educational Television, Mss 209, Box 2, Folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society.

This pace paralleled what had happened with FM radio. The report of the 1949 meeting of broadcasters at the University of Illinois's Allerton House retreat was frank on this point: "Educational groups and school systems have failed, in many cases, to take advantage of the channels set aside for their use in the FM band." The explanation was rooted in institutional decision-making: "educational planners dependent upon deliberations of legislative and administrative bodies, cannot move as rapidly into new areas as can commercial broadcasters." The prediction was similar for television: "Educational television and facsimile activities will be limited, in the beginning, by lack of funds."²⁰ That prediction was accurate. Out of 242 allocated channels, there were only 10 stations on the air within two years and fewer than 10% of the allocated channels saw any station operation within three years. In Phoenix, for example, Channel 8 had been allocated in 1952, but nothing happened for many years. Despite visitors like I. Keith Tyler at a meeting of interested parties in December 1952 in Phoenix, Arizona State President Grady Gammage was passive, and as Arizona State television advocate Richard Bell scrawled in a note to the executive director of the Joint Committee on Educational Television, "Prezy won't pay any attention to these [missives]." Arizona State College finally applied for a construction permit at the end of the decade, after its rival University of Arizona had acquired a permit for a station in Tucson.²¹ Of the greatest worry to educational television's advocates, the

²⁰ Seminar on Educational Radio, "Educational Broadcasting: Its Aims and Responsibilities," July 9, 1949, p. 18; in National Association of Educational Broadcasters Records, 1925-1977, Box 39, Folder 5, Wisconsin Historical Society.

²¹ Joint Committee on Educational Television. "Two Years of Progress in Educational Television," October 1954, I. Keith Tyler papers, box UA.RG40.62.0005, "JCET meetings, reports 1954" folder; H. D. Richardson, "Minutes of State Educational Television Meeting," Arizona State College, December 18, 1952, Box 83, Folder 11, Arizona State University Records Collection CM MSS-98; Richard H. Bell to Ralph Steetle, September 14, 1954, NET records, Series 5A, Box 3; copy of the original construction permit for KAET, November 8, 1960, NET records, Series 5A, Box 3.

New York and Los Angeles metro areas were entirely without educational television stations at the end of the 1950s.

Those advocates were worried but mostly undaunted by the lackadaisical follow-through in many communities. While many advocates of educational broadcasting were well aware of the practical barriers, there was a strong utopian streak, and advocates kept organizing their lobbying efforts and operational activities around the assumption that states would take the lead on educational television. This became evident in several ways: in commissions and committees in a number of states that proposed statewide networks, and in the collection and organization of information state by state about the development of educational television.

State Commissions

Shortly after the FCC allocation of TV stations in 1952, a number of states created ad hoc commissions charged to explore what television meant for the state's educational needs. These commissions were created by legislative or executive authority and structured an official discussion around the benefits and challenges of educational television.²² The campaigns for television networks within states was embedded within the national organizing effort on behalf of reserving channels for educational television, and after the nascent (mostly failed) efforts at creating state FM radio networks. Testimony in front of the commissions was often supported by the Joint Committee on Educational Television (JCET), if not provided directly by JCET and its representatives.²³ The scope of commission recommendations illustrate the limits of the state-first strategy for educational television advocates.

²² There were city-level committees in Pittsburgh and Boston. There were a number of state commissions or legislative study committees in the 1960s as well (e.g., Kansas, Ohio, North Carolina), though this paper focuses on the failed initial effort at network building in the 1950s.

²³ E.g., Telford Taylor, "Statement of Telford Taylor before the Temporary [New York] State Commission on the Use of Television for Educational Purposes," January 21, 1953, in I. Keith Tyler papers, RG40.62, box

New York

The Temporary State Commission on the Use of Television for Educational Purposes in New York was authorized in 1952 by the state legislature. This commission was required to study the feasibility operating a noncommercial and educational television system by public or private organizations, the cost of the establishment of educational television stations, and finding an appropriate funding source for the educational television—this followed a proposal of the state Board of Regents to operate a network for the state.²⁴ Governor Thomas Dewey appointed seven members, including communications research pioneer Paul Lazarsfeld. The legislature designated eight additional members to represent legislative leaders, the state budget office and Commissioner of Commerce, and two members representing education: one member each from the board of regents and the state university trustees. In January 1953, a legislative hearing of the Commission was held and over the next month, the majority of the Commission rejected the proposal for state-operated educational television stations. In its report, it stated several reasons for the rejection of a state network: escalating costs for both construction and operation of stations, let alone television sets for schools; competing demands for state financing; the willingness of commercial stations to provide air time for programs produced by colleges and universities; and the prospect of a very small audience, especially given the channel allocations in the UHF frequency band and the lack of any channel reservation in New York City.²⁵

UA.RG40.62.0005, “JCET meetings, reports 1953” folder, Ohio State University, University Archives. Taylor was a former FCC general counsel whom JCET hired specifically for the television allocation hearings.

²⁴ The authorization of the commission was in New York Chapter 479 (1952).

²⁵ *New York Times*, “Texts of Report on Educational TV Stations and Minority View,” February 25, 1953; clipping in NET records, Series 5A, Box 165, “Majority Report” folder, Wisconsin Historical Society.

A minority of the Commission lamented both the speed of the majority's dismissal of a state network and the majority's substantive reasoning.²⁶ Comprised of the education representatives on the commission, plus one of the governor's appointees (but not Lazarsfeld), the minority mostly repeated the arguments that the JCET and other educational broadcasting advocates had used in front of the FCC: commercial stations were not providing sufficient time for educational purposes, and educational broadcasting was an efficient use of resources (in the case of the New York commission minority, with construction costs the minority compared with a few miles of the New York Thruway). The minority report also observed that the witnesses testifying against a statewide network were generally representing upstate interests. But the majority included state budget officials, the bipartisan leadership of the legislature, and the most prominent national researcher on communications.

Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, the special commission on the use of television for educational purposes first met on the symbolic date of July 4, 1952, in Boston. Some members of the State Board of Education and legislators discussed the public interest in educational television. The early focus of the special commission was how to acquire funding and the proper authority for the construction of educational television stations. As described in a private report by a JCET consultant, Seymour Krieger, the major concern was finding an appropriate way to construct educational television station and some funding sources for its construction and operation. But after a discussion, the special commission decided to request \$50,000 from the legislature to conduct the necessary engineering studies in connection with the FCC requirements. As Krieger

²⁶ Norman S. Goetz, Isabel H. Kideney, and John P. Meyers. "Minority Report to the Governor and the Legislature of the State of New York," February 1953, NET records, Series 5A, Box 165, "Minority Report" folder.

reported, he private urged a key local advocate to use the private Lowell Institute to apply for a construction permit in the likely case that the legislature never provided authority for the state to apply.²⁷ And that is what eventually happened: WGBH-TV became a station licensed to the non-profit WGBH Foundation.

In minor matters, the Commission was successful in lobbying the legislature. The Commission successfully argued for the creation of a state Board of Educational Television with representatives of the state Board of Education as well as four additional gubernatorial appointees, but the appropriations were at the level of minimal planning, not network construction: \$25,000 in the 1953-1954 fiscal year.²⁸ As in New York, the Massachusetts commission never called for substantial investment in constructing or operating stations or a network. In its third report in 1954, the commission stated that from “the very start, this Commission had no false hope that public funds would be available to operate a reserved channel” and knew that private funds would be necessary to create WGBH as an operating station in Boston.²⁹ But in its final report, the commission claimed that the major investment by the state was providing engineering support to the state commission, and stated, “No state funds have been involved in the construction or operation of educational television channels. No activity of the Commission can be considered as providing direct or indirect financial aid to a particular educational channel in violation of the constitutional limitations.” It termed support of the new state board of educational television “token appropriations.”³⁰

²⁷ Seyour Krieger, “Report of Meeting with Massachusetts Commission for Educational Purposes,” 1952, NET records, Series 5A, Box 39.

²⁸ Massachusetts Chapter 675 (1953).

²⁹ Massachusetts Special Commission on Educational Television, “Third Report of the Special Commission on Educational Television,” May 1954, Massachusetts State Library: 11.
<https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/246780>.

³⁰ Massachusetts Special Commission on Educational Television, “Final Report of the Special Commission on Educational Television,” June 1955, Massachusetts State Library: 5, 9, 12.

Connecticut

The case of Connecticut represents another response to the proposal of a state-wide educational television network: a proposed pilot development of programming tested, potentially, through commercial stations.³¹ The Connecticut State Commission on Educational Television considered five options from abandoning the reserved educational channels to full-throttle construction of a three-channel state network. After defining educational television as an educational program for both adults and children, the commission considered issues similar to those in other states: construction and operating costs, the paucity of existing programming, the willingness of commercial stations to air educational programming, and the lack of UHF receivers in the state (under 50,000 households, according to the commission report). The commission also considered what it saw as a dilemma for any new station: how could it fill the required broadcasting hours with a limited budget and simultaneously attract an audience?

Educational programs could more successfully compete with commercial entertainment for favorable hours on commercial stations if, by reason of their high quality, they were more attractive to viewing audiences. In fact, the Commission is convinced that the production of effective, appealing and constructive programs is the most important single problem involved in the success of educational television. Even if state-owned stations were operated, they would have to compete for an audience with commercial entertainment.³²

<https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/250790>. The commission did not explain what constitutional provisions constrained state support of educational television.

³¹ Connecticut State Commission on Educational Television, "Report of the Connecticut State Commission on Educational Television," May 1954, National Association of Educational Broadcasters Records, Box 83, Folder 4, Wisconsin Historical Society.

³² Connecticut State Commission on Educational Television, "Report," 12.

The commission's main recommendation was for the creation of a state agency, the Educational Broadcasting Commission, that would pilot some programming and, after two years, consider the construction of a state-owned educational television station.³³

North Carolina

The Educational Radio and Television Commission was the third statewide body in North Carolina to study and make recommendations about educational telecommunications, and its final recommendation against building a state network in the foreseeable future came out of that history. In February 1948, Governor Gregg Cherry had appointed 14 individuals to a State Educational FM Radio Committee, "organized to explore the advisability of North Carolina's entering the educational FM broadcast field."³⁴ This first committee recommended that a collaborative committee of K-12 and higher-education representatives oversee the establishment of a statewide educational FM network, with the construction and operation of four program production centers. It also recommended the creation of another group to consider broader educational telecommunications interests of the state.³⁵ That second recommendation led to the 1949 appointment of a North Carolina Communication Study Commission, this time authorized by the legislature, and membership overlapping with Governor Cherry's committee.³⁶ In 1951, the Communications Study Committee recommended the funding of staff positions (specifically a State Audio-Visual Director and an advisory committee) to support educational uses of

³³ Connecticut Public Broadcasting, Inc., is the non-profit that operates both PBS and NPR stations; despite its name, it is not a state agency. (Minnesota Public Radio is similarly operated by a non-profit organization whose parent non-profit operates in California.)

³⁴ R. Gregg Cherry to Earl Wynn, February 11, 1948, in DRTMP, box 15, "FM Radio Education Committee, 1948-1950" folder.

³⁵ W. H. Plemmons, "Final Report and Recommendation of the Non-Technical Sub-Committee of the North Carolina FM Radio Education Committee."

³⁶ North Carolina Governor's Office, "Appointments to Communications Study Commission," November 23, 1949, DRTMP, box 14, "Communications Study Commission [NCCSC] Advisory Committee Lists of Members" folder.

audiovisual material in general—radio, television, film, and filmstrips, a range of recommended activities, and approximately \$600,000 each of the following two years in dedicated appropriations.³⁷ Two years later, they again recommended funding staff support for the educational use of audiovisual material, this time at the level of a consultant.³⁸

Why that shift in the language of the recommendations from 1951 to 1953, from director to consultant? The North Carolina General Assembly had refused to fund any related positions or activities in 1951.³⁹ From five years of advocacy, representatives on two official state groups had nothing to show in terms of legislative support—nothing for a state radio network, nothing for a statewide initiative to promote audiovisual use in education, nothing even for minimal staffing in the state's department of education.

In the midst of that failure came the appointment of the Educational Radio and Television Commission in late winter 1953. This new Commission requested the General Assembly to approve continuing funding to operate the new University of North Carolina television station, WUNC in Chapel Hill, but apart from asking the FCC to keep reserving the designated educational UHF channels in other parts of the state, it explicitly recommended against “the activation of UHF channels at this time,” after the challenges of broadcasting and receiving in UHF became evident. Instead of building out a statewide network, it called for treating WUNC's “Channel 4 as an educational television pilot station and has recommended that key programs of WUNC-TV be made available to all of the people of North Carolina through the cooperation of

³⁷ North Carolina Communication Study Commission. “A Report to the Governor and General Assembly of North Carolina by the North Carolina Communication Study Commission,” January 1, 1951, DRTMP, box 15, “Communication Study Commission [NCCSC] Report 1951; 1953” folder.

³⁸ North Carolina Communication Study Commission. “Report and Recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly of North Carolina by the North Carolina Communication Study Commission,” January 1, 1953, DRTMP, box 15, “Communication Study Commission [NCCSC] Report 1951; 1953” folder.

³⁹ Earl Wynn, North Carolina Communication Study Commission Minutes, April 30, 1951, DRTMP, box 14, “Communication Study Commission [NCCSC] Minutes, 1949-1951” folder.

commercial television stations.”⁴⁰ Earl Wynn had been a member of all three statewide groups and the staff directors for the second and third; as the chair of the Department of Radio, Television, and Motion Pictures at UNC, he had been an advocate of educational radio and television within his university and for the entire state, and his ambitions for the state had been whittled down year by year from a statewide network to WUNC’s incipient television station as a mere pilot.

Wisconsin’s Educational Television Referendum Campaign

Wisconsin’s 1954 educational television referendum belongs in the context of other state-level discussions. While the Federal Communications Commission made a federal policy decision to reserve several hundred local television channels for educational use, the response was a set of state-by-state debates. The state-first strategy of educational television advocates was not required by the FCC, and in the 1950s the FCC only granted construction permits for individual stations, one-by-one. The focus on state networks was thus a construction of education television advocates, with advocates of statewide networks making arguments on behalf of educational television in general, arguments that they had become familiar with as part of the national lobbying effort. Skeptics of educational television networks also made many arguments that were common across the states, as the common commission recommendations against state networks show. Advocates had chosen the battlefield at the state level—and in most cases in the 1950s, they lost the argument. The Wisconsin referendum campaign demonstrates the dynamics in detail—excruciating detail, from the perspectives of contemporary educational television advocates.

⁴⁰ North Carolina Educational Radio and Television Commission, “Report of the North Carolina Educational Radio and Television Commission,” December 10, 1954, University of North Carolina Television Network Records (40258), box 10, folder 257, University of North Carolina University Archives: 5.

In Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Citizens Committee for Educational Television (WCCET) formed in May 1952, immediately after the FCC channel reservation. With officers drawn from several statewide organizations—the Wisconsin Council of Agriculture; the United Association of Office, Sales, and Technical Employees; the Wisconsin Congress of Parents and Teachers; and the Wisconsin Home Demonstration Council, as well as the University of Wisconsin American Association of University Women—the WCCET then drew upon the expertise of and made common cause with University of Wisconsin Madison faculty deeply involved with educational broadcasting, including WHA’s radio stations.⁴¹ WCCET immediately set out its mission of persuading the state to build and operate educational television, starting with the wide distribution of a booklet on television produced by the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, and building a coalition in favor of publicly-funded television.⁴² Support from several community organizations came quickly from the Wisconsin Council of Catholic Women, the Business and Professional Women of Milwaukee, the Iron County Homemakers Council, the First Congregational Church Guild, and the Madison branch of the National League of American Pen Women, among others.⁴³ The public support in 1952 included the head of a Milwaukee radio station who had applied for television stations in Milwaukee and Madison.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Wisconsin Citizens Committee for Educational Television (WCCET), “Memorandum on Organizational Meeting of Wisconsin Citizens Committee for Educational Television,” May 7, 1952, in WCCET papers, Mss 209, box 2, folder 1, Wisconsin Historical Society. Other members of the executive committee included representatives of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, the Wisconsin Congress of Industrial Organizations, and the Farmers Union; Milo K. Swanton, “Television: An Essential to the Future of Education in Wisconsin,” draft testimony before the Wisconsin Legislative Council, September 22, 1952, in WCCET papers, box 2, folder 6.

⁴² WCCET executive committee meeting notes, May 14, 1952, in WCCET papers, box 2, folder 1; executive committee meeting notes, May 27, 1952, in WCCET papers, box 2, folder 3.

⁴³ Dorothy McCarthy to Milo Swanton, May 16, 1952, in WCCET papers, box 3, folder 5; [Swanton] to “Mrs. Horne,” May 29, 1952, WCCET papers, box 1, folder 2.

⁴⁴ Bill Doudna, “TV for Education,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, September 22, 1952, in WCCET papers, box 2, folder 6.

But opposition also came quickly. One early sign came in Milwaukee when members of the Milwaukee Common Council wanted to help form a consortium of local educational institutions to run a station. This was a local issue at the time it arose in July 1952, and would have included both public and private organizations. But several aldermen objected even to sponsorship of a joint meeting, arguing that the inclusion of the Milwaukee Vocational School Board would first require considering whether the vocational school could legally operate a television station.⁴⁵ By the time the chair of WCCET testified to the state Legislative Council in September 1952, and bills were drafted in 1953 for direct state support of educational television, WCCET members knew that there was no consensus, and settled for the legislature's final resolution in the 1953 session, putting a referendum on the ballot.⁴⁶ In November 1953, WCCET had an official opponent for the referendum campaign: the Committee on State-owned Tax-supported Television.⁴⁷

The arguments of WCCET and its allies were generic and milquetoast. In February 1954, WCCET chair declared, "What the ultimate application of education to television, and vice-versa, will be no one can now fortell. Its inherent potentialities stagger the imagination," with the promise that "[i]n schools, television can be a valuable supplementary tool."⁴⁸ The Wisconsin *State Journal* echoed the WCCET and urged a yes vote just to forestall failure, "Television is in its infancy. No one can possibly know its future in detail this early in life. But its potentialities

⁴⁵ "Is school TV Legal? Council Asks Again," Milwaukee *Sentinel*, July 2, 1952, in WCCET papers, box 4, folder 1.

⁴⁶ Swanton, "Television: An Essential to the Future of Education in Wisconsin;" and typescript bill drafts in WCCET papers, box 4, folder 5.

⁴⁷ "'No' State TV Group Formed," Madison *State-Journal*, November 24, 1953, clipping in WCCET papers, box 4, folder 1. Articles did not identify organizations behind the anti-referendum committee other than the presence of three publishers and a representative of the Public Expenditure Survey of Wisconsin.

⁴⁸ Swanton, "Wisconsin Citizens Back Educational Television," *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, February 1954, clipping in WCCET papers, box 1, folder 3.

appear great. We need time to watch, experiment, and ponder. A ‘Yes’ vote on Tuesday will keep the pondering period alive.”⁴⁹ In tiny Frederic, in Polk County, the *Wisconsin Farmers Union News* relied on professional authority, pointing out that teacher and administrator organizations were in favor of the referendum, that it was likely to be cost-efficient, and that commercial television “cannot begin to fulfill the specialized demands of educational television.”⁵⁰ Only a limited number of proponents were more specific. In the Racine *Wisconsin Agriculturist and Farmer*, Bill Groves argued that educational television would provide material for rural children that they were unlikely to be exposed to otherwise, and that farmers in the countryside would be able to learn the “very latest agricultural developments from the laboratory.”⁵¹

The opposition focused not only on costs, which had concerned commissions in other states, but also the question of state-owned media: the Manitowoc *Herald Times* editorial board repeated the arguments of the Committee on State-owned Tax-supported Television, which “was opposed to the network partially because of its educational limitation, the dangers of political control, and the costs, which outweigh [sic] the good which can come from such a program.” The *Herald Times* noted the outcomes of state commissions, and suggested that educational films are more flexible and better used in classrooms than television was likely to be.⁵² In its summary of pro-and-con arguments, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin stated the political concern of opponents as follows: “There are political dangers inherent in government control of

⁴⁹ “Keep Educational TV Alive,” October 29, 1954, section 1, page 8, clipping in WCCET papers, box 4, folder 3.

⁵⁰ “A Vote for Better Education,” October 11, 1954, 4, clipping in WCCET papers, box 4, folder 3.

⁵¹ William F. Groves, “Think before Voting on Educational TV,” *Wisconsin Agriculturist and Farmer*, October 2, 1954, 22, clipping in WCCET, box 4, folder 2.

⁵² “State-owned TV Undesirable,” Manitowoc *Herald-Times*, 16, clipping in WCCET papers, box 4, folder 4.

mass communication media. TV could be a powerful propaganda weapon in the hands of political office holders in the state governments.”⁵³

The ideological concerns may not have been what led to the landslide vote against the referendum. Farmer Henry Keller, from St. Cloud in Fond du Lac County, voiced his skepticism in a letter to the *Agriculturist and Farmer*:

I think we have plenty TV programs already without the state going in that business and spending millions of dollars for something that nobody will get much good out of.... We are supposed to have two state radio stations, but I never got them on our radio yet. And I didn't hear of anyone in eastern Wisconsin that listens to them. So they sure aren't benefiting any one around here.⁵⁴

In the end, WCCET and its allies were unable to persuade more than a third of Wisconsin's 1954 voters that educational television was substantive, cost-effective, and worth taxpayer support.

The popular vote in Wisconsin mirrored the commissions of other states.

Federalism and the Failure of the States-First Approach in Educational Television

As the preceding section demonstrates, in the 1950s educational television advocates were committed to a state-first strategy of building out a national set of educational television stations. But the mid-1950s dreams of advocates did not turn into immediate approval of state television networks and in most cases were still not moving in any way towards network creation by 1960, at least based on a state-first strategy. Despite success in lobbying the FCC to reserve channels for educational uses, advocates were blocked when they turned to states for the systematic building and operation of educational television. At some level, the state-first strategy was reasonable—the low chance of success at the state level may still have been much higher

⁵³ League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, “Referendum on Tax-Supported Educational TV,” October 1954, in WCCET papers, box 3, folder 7.

⁵⁴ Letter to the editor (“Don't Need State TV Station”), *Wisconsin Agriculturist and Farmer*, October 1, 1954, clipping in WCCET papers, box 4, folder 2.

than the prospects of federal funding for educational television, an idea floated by Connecticut Senator William Benton in 1951.⁵⁵ And what emerged in fact was the development of individual stations at the local level, what turned out to be an unsustainable model for educational television until the chartering and funding of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in the late 1960s.

The failures to build state networks in educational television in the 1950s demonstrate the power of federalism well beyond divided legal authority. On the one hand, federal control of the airwaves did not make building state networks easy. First, states faced uncertainty about the long-term status of educational reservations. Under the 1952 order, after a one-year hiatus in 1952-1953, the FCC allowed commercial broadcasters to petition to move channels from the educational reservation to commercial use. If states had wanted to plan networks in the 1950s, this provision would have created a planning hazard for states needing assurance of channel availability. In addition, the channel allocations of the 1952 order raised costs and limited audiences for educational television: the majority of the channels reserved for educational usage were in the UHF (ultra-high frequency) part of the spectrum, which most private television sets could not receive in the 1950s, and which required greater power for transmission.⁵⁶

Beyond these issues specific to the 1952 order allocating television channels, there were other persistent behaviors and decision-making that were at least moderate barriers to building

⁵⁵ Benton, the American publisher of *Encyclopedia Britannica* for three decades, was a junior senator frustrated with the FCC and in early 1951 was asking university administrators and educational broadcasting advocates about the best way to support educational television, including potential federal aid. The response by those lobbying the FCC was restrained horror, as they imagined their cause wrapped up in the broader controversies over federal aid to education. Their responses to Benton was, briefly, “no thank you.” See John A. Hannah to William Benton, May 29, 1951, and Telford Taylor to Benton, June 6, 1951, both in National Educational Television records, Series 5A, Box 157, “BENTON (Senator William) general” folder, Wisconsin Historical Society. As Perlman demonstrates in *Public Interests*, advocates were willing to cooperate with white supremacists in the South as long as it advanced educational broadcasting—in this case, avoiding a potential link between educational television and segregation of schools.

⁵⁶ Congress required so-called “all-receiver” sets in the 1960s, but the asymmetry in cost and reception remained for years.

networks. The FCC approved or denied petitions for individual stations, not sets of stations. This station-level regulatory approach imposed direct and indirect costs that states faced in planning networks once action began in several states in the 1960s. Finally, the FCC maintained technical requirements to prevent signal interference between individual stations, creating a complex engineering and sometimes a political dilemma in siting stations and transmission facilities.⁵⁷

Of these factors, it was the FCC's propensity to reserve UHF channels for education that state commissions repeatedly mentioned as one of the reasons why they recommended against statewide networks. But the state commissions framed the limitation of UHF channels within a larger context: the uncertain audience for UHF channels matched the untested value of television for education, its uncertain costs, the putative willingness of commercial stations to air educational programming, and qualms about state governments having control of the most powerful, newest mass media. Despite federal control of the airwaves, ordinary matters of state politics dominated the decisions that turned educational television from a potential for state television networks into a poorly-funded, channel-by-channel project for its backers.

The mindset of educational broadcasters and advocates included a federalism of the airwaves. Despite the unquestioned legal authority of the FCC, through the 1950s and for the most part until the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, most discussions of educational television operated as if local and state politics were essential. Money would need to come from states, advocates assumed, but through the 1950s most states invested little or nothing in educational

⁵⁷ In 1951, the FCC's draft allocation provided a UHF channel to Columbus, OH. Ohio State University's administration wanted the FCC to change the allocation to a VHF channel, but to make that argument, staff had to engage in a broadcast engineer's version of musical chairs: persuading the Indianapolis schools to sign a statement that they were not interested in the VHF allocation to Indianapolis, and then making the case that without interference with the (now-vacated) Indianapolis VHF educational channel, the proposed VHF channel for Columbus would *also* not interfere with allocated channels in West Virginia. The FCC denied the Ohio State University request in its 1952 final order and allocation.

television. The failures of advocates in the first decade of educational television demonstrated the power of the federal polity, the underlying worldview of how education activities should operate mostly at the state level. Federalism in educational broadcasting thus was real, but not driven by the schematic version of federalism with divided *constitutional* authority. The divided authority was as much in the heads of historical actors as in legal decisions or the result of deliberation and debate.

Federalism of the airwaves was also built by the lived experience of educational television broadcasters whose limitations were built in part by schools. On the one hand, most local public television stations relied on local public school revenues by the late 1960s, using daytime schedule slots to air programs for in-school purposes.⁵⁸ And local schools often pushed back against more imperial projects like the Midwest Program on Airborne Television Instruction.⁵⁹ Of *course* education was in the hands of the states, educational broadcasters understood tacitly. But there was a more sinister version of this living federalism in the 1950s. Educational television advocates were desperate to stay out of debates over segregation and racial equality. Major figures in national organizations such as NAEB President Graydon Ausmus, at the University of Alabama, needed the white power structure of each state to keep the educational broadcasting project alive – and it is notable that Alabama was for many years the first and only state to have a (small) state educational television network.⁶⁰ The location of so many figures in public universities not only set the stage for the state-first strategy after the 1952

⁵⁸ E.g., Robert D. B. Carlisle, “PTV and School Shutdowns.” Memorandum, October 3, 1968, in Robert D. B. Carlisle Papers, box 1, folder 6, University of Maryland Special Collections.

⁵⁹ Cain, *Screens and Schools*.

⁶⁰ See Perlman, *Public Interests*, for the story of the Alabama network and racial politics.

FCC order, it also put the bulk of the advocates' network in the middle of state education politics.

By the time the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television began discussing a Congressionally-chartered entity to run this new entity the commission called *public television*, there was only a single member of the commission who remembered the role of states: Terry Sanford, the immediate past governor of North Carolina, who had appointed the *fourth* commission in his state to consider educational broadcasting.⁶¹ Sanford proposed that some members of the prospective Corporation for Public Television be appointed by governors, and he solicited feedback from sitting governors.⁶² Fourteen governors responded, and few clearly endorsing Sanford's proposal for a quasi-federal structure for the new entity. Sanford's proposal died, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting became a Congressionally-chartered private organization whose board was and remains appointed entirely by the president.

What can we make from the largely failed and now forgotten efforts to create state educational television networks in the 1950s? This submerged history implies a much more contingent nature of federalism in education politics, even in the era where K-12 education policy debates were full of prickliness around federal power. Federalism could have been a more active organizing principle in educational broadcasting policy, and the omission of states from federal policy in broadcasting underscores how the balance of state and federal authority in

⁶¹ The North Carolina state network was finally built out in the 1960s, after federal cost-sharing of station construction was made possible with the Educational Television Facilities Act of 1962.

⁶² See the collection of responses in "State Governor Responses to Sanford, Undated, Passed along to CCETV," Fall 1966, Carnegie Commission on Educational TV papers, box 5, folder 13, Wisconsin Historical Society. The Carnegie Commission proposed a structure only for public television, and the Public Television Act as originally introduced also ignored radio – it took lobbying efforts by educational radio advocates to change the Public Television Act to the Public Broadcasting Act, leading to the creation of National Public Radio alongside television's Public Broadcasting System. As with television, the politics of educational and now public radio has largely elided states as entities.

education is a matter of constant creation and recreation, not carved in stone. Educational federalism is in but not of the Constitution.