



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1723-2001, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1723

Resolution supporting democratic, legal management at WBAI 99.5 FM Radio and affirming the stated position of the Concerned Friends of WBAI in relation to the current situation existing between WBAI and the Pacifica Foundation.

By Council Members Quinn, Freed, Lopez, Miller, Eldridge, Linares and Rivera; also Council Members Leffler, Robles, Eisland, DiBrienza, Wooten, Rodriguez, Perkins, Espada, Marshall and Koslowitz.

Whereas, Over the last several months, a crisis has emerged between WBAI, 99.5 FM, of New York and the Pacifica Foundation, with the foundation attempting to assert a stifling level of control upon the local institution, and to fundamentally alter its character and purpose; and Whereas, In recent weeks, the Pacifica Foundation has become increasingly aggressive in its attempts to coerce WBAI; and

Whereas, These attempts culminated, on December 22nd, in a series of hostile measures, including lockouts, firings, and attempts to coerce the Local Advisory Board; and

Whereas, These efforts run contrary to the democratic structure and purpose espoused by the station and the Pacifica founder, Lewis Hill; and

Whereas, the Concerned Friends of WBAI adopted a statement on January 11th, 2001, which reads:

1. We, the Concerned Friends of WBAI reject all interventions by the Pacifica Foundation's national, staff or Board of Directors into the management of WBAI which are carried out without a process that includes the participation of WBAI's staff and Local Advisory Board.
2. We call for the immediate reinstatement of all fired staff, the immediate and permanent lifting of all bans which have kept staff members and listeners out of the station or off the air, a commitment to no gag rule, the removal of security guards, the restoration of regular programming, and the end of all censorship.
3. We demand a democratic process involving staff (paid and unpaid), listeners and the Local Advisory Board to determine the General Manager of the station.
4. We demand that Pacifica immediately guarantee that all staff, paid and unpaid, be included in the WBAI collective bargaining unit.
5. We call on station staff and listeners to support:
 - a) the current lawsuits against the Pacifica National Board;
 - b) establishment of local election procedures for the ongoing selection of Local Advisory Board members;
 - c) national efforts, including those at the four other Pacifica stations, to establish a democratic process within the National Board to allow the Foundation to return to Lewis Hill's original mission.

Whereas, The Pacifica Foundation has, through these actions, obstructed the autonomy of a vibrant local institution; and Whereas, Since 1960, WBAI has been home to a diverse range of award-winning content that has won accolades and a dedicated following of listeners from across the country; and Whereas, The agenda of Pacifica would extinguish WBAI's local character and its diversity of viewpoints; and Whereas, WBAI has long been a friend to the people of New York and vital contributor to our civic discourse; now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports democratic, legal management at WBAI 99.5 FM Radio and affirms the stated position of the Concerned Friends of WBAI in relation to the current situation existing between WBAI and the Pacifica Foundation.

SF:bg
LS#3857
D-Res.5
2/1/01

