



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0268-2004, **Version:** *

Res. No. 268

Resolution calling upon Nielsen Media Research to delay the introduction of Local People Meter service in the New York City media market until such time as sufficient studies have been conducted to ensure fair and accurate counting of all New York City viewers regardless of race, ethnicity or national origin.

By Council Members Monserrate, Baez, Barron, Fidler, Foster, Gonzalez, James, Koppell, Lopez, Palma, Quinn, Sanders, Vann, Jackson, Liu, The Public Advocate (Ms. Gotbaum) and Council Member Seabrook.

Whereas, Nielsen Media Research is a ratings company that provides television audience estimates for broadcast and cable networks, television stations, national syndicators, regional cable television systems, satellite providers, advertisers and advertising agencies; and

Whereas, In their capacity as a ratings company, Nielsen Media Research should ensure that their rating system fairly and accurately records the viewing choices of all viewers regardless of race, ethnicity or national origin; and

Whereas, In 2002, Nielsen Media Research announced that over the next several years they would replace their current meter-diary measurement system with Local People Meter service in the top ten markets in the United States, beginning with Boston in May 2002; and

Whereas, According to the timetable set by Nielsen Media Research, the New York City market is scheduled for introduction of the Local People Meter service on April 8, 2004; and

Whereas, Serious questions have been raised regarding the tendency of Local People Meter service to undercount minority viewers, especially African-American and Latino viewers; and

Whereas, Nielsen Media Research has not offered any satisfactory explanation for the large discrepancies between ratings collected using their current system and those collected using the Local People

Meter service, which have shown massive declines in viewer-ship for top rated programs among African-Americans, as well as Spanish-language networks; and

Whereas, Nielsen Media Research has itself recognized the flaws in the Local People Meter service as evidenced by its decision to delay the introduction of such service in the Los Angeles and Chicago media markets for the stated reason that these markets are extremely diverse; and

Whereas, The New York City media market is equally, if not more, diverse than any other media market in the country; and

Whereas, Nielsen Media Research has publicly admitted as recently as 2000, that they were undercounting Spanish-language speakers in the New York City media market by approximately 300,00 households; and

Whereas, A ratings technology that systematically undercounts minority viewers could consequently harm ongoing efforts to introduce greater diversity into America's entertainment industry; and

Whereas, Based on persistent and unanswered questions regarding the tendency of the Local People Meter service to systematically undercount minority viewers; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon Nielsen Media Research to delay the introduction of Local People Meter service in the New York City media market until such time as sufficient studies have been conducted to ensure fair and accurate counting of all New York City viewers regardless of race, ethnicity or national origin

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3/29/2004

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