

**DISSENTING STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Rules and Policies to Promote New Entry and Ownership Diversity in the Broadcasting Services*,
MB Docket No. 17-289

For decades, at the direction of Congress, the Federal Communications Commission maintained limits on the number of broadcast stations that a single company can own. These rules prevented a single entity from owning the top television stations in the same market. They also placed limits on the number of television stations and radio stations a single entity could control in any community. These policies were designed to sustain media diversity, localism, and competition. Those values may not be especially trendy, but I think they are solid. I think they support journalism and jobs. I think they play a critical role in advancing the mix of facts we all need to make decisions about our lives, our communities, and our country.

In a decision late last year, the FCC dismantled those values. Instead of engaging in thoughtful reform that modernizes our rules—which we should do—it set our most basic values on fire. They are gone. As a result, wherever you live the FCC has given the green light for a single company to own the newspaper and multiple television and radio stations in your community. I am hard pressed to see any commitment to diversity, localism, or competition in that result.

We should be troubled. Because we are not going to remedy what ails our media today with a rush of new consolidation. We are not going to fix our ability to ferret out fact from fiction by doubling down on just a handful of companies controlling our public airwaves. We are not going to be able to remedy the way the highest level in government is now comfortable stirring up angry sentiment, denouncing news as false facts, and bestowing favors on outlets with narratives that flatter those in power rather than offer the hard-hitting assessments we need as citizens. Despite all this, our policy changes have greased the way for mergers of ever greater magnitude—which let's be honest, will not do a thing to make it more likely that women and minorities become owners of broadcast stations.

To apologize for this set back, today the FCC offers the most modest of proposals. It will provide existing radio station owners with the right to exceed radio ownership limits if they offer a bit of aid to a qualifying new entrant in the market. There is nothing bold here. I fail to see how it will make a material difference in the diversity of media ownership. Its scope is too narrow, its consequences too small, and its impact on markets too muddled. Moreover, I fail to see how this will satisfy the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit which on—count them—three occasions has directed the FCC to take meaningful actions to address the shameful lack of racial and gender diversity in broadcast station ownership.

Media ownership matters because what we see and hear over the air says so much about who we are as individuals, as communities, and as a nation. Study a bit of history and you can only come to one conclusion: consolidation will make our stations look less and less like the communities they serve. Women and minorities have struggled for too long to take the reins at media outlets. Because today's action will do too little to change that reality for too many who have waited too long, I dissent.