

The Federal Communications Commission should deny the assignment of licenses from Tribune Media Company to Sinclair Broadcast Group. The proposed transaction would fuel monopolistic markets while violating the national audience reach cap as well, all to make Sinclair the largest player in the broadcast industry.

Communities within new overlap markets would see a permanent reduction in the number of independent voices and a decline in local journalism jobs, as well as diminished opportunities for women and people of color to own local stations. Every market served by the combined entity would experience a reduction in responsive local news as a result of Sinclair's top-down national approach.

Diverse programmers would risk being priced out of the market as Sinclair leverages its scale for exorbitant retransmission consent fees, for which pay-TV subscribers will invariably pay the bill.

Sinclair's practice of forcing stations to promote an extreme conservative perspective and distort local news actively threatens the wellbeing of marginalized communities across the nation, specifically communities of color and immigrants. People of color disproportionately rely on broadcast news and thus will be disproportionately harmed by a reduction in localism, competition and diversity.

The appearance of a quid pro quo arrangement between the Trump administration and Sinclair, suggested by the timing of the transaction and statements by Trump advisers, also raises concerns that Sinclair may be trading positive coverage for regulatory favors. While Sinclair is welcome to an editorial viewpoint, it is not entitled to distort news coverage to those ends or extract tailor-made changes to Commission rules.

Sinclair has failed to demonstrate affirmatively any merger-specific public interest benefits from this deal that could outweigh the enormous tangible harms. The Commission must deny the transaction.