

Courtney A. Kemp
Creator, Executive Producer
Power
March 30, 2016

Via Electronic Comments Filing System

Federal Communications Commission
Attention: Ms. Marlene Dortch, Secretary
445 12th Street NW
Washington DC 20554

Re: Promoting the Availability of Diverse and Independent Sources of Video
Programming – MB Docket No. 16-41

Dear Chairman Wheeler and Commissioners:

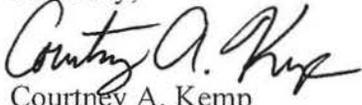
As a member of the entertainment community, I am writing to urge you to press forward in the promotion of diverse and independent sources of programming. If the marketplace becomes more difficult for independent programmers, untraditional voices will be silenced. Independent programmers—*because* they are independent—can have more courage to take risks, to innovate, to change the media landscape. Diverse, untraditional, new voices thrive when independent programmers are given the chance to compete.

While my show, *Power*, is now successful, four years ago it was just an idea. Starz was not the first network that I pitched. When I was turned down at other outlets, many lovely explanations were given for the “no,” but they all came down to one point: the main characters were non-white, and the show was too big a risk to take, in both the domestic and foreign markets. Now entering our fourth season, airing in 166 countries, it seems that these more conventional ways of thinking were incorrect. But what if there were no Starz? What if there were no independent programmers that after those “no” answers from the bigger companies, I had nowhere to go? What if Starz and other independent programmers like it are drummed out of the marketplace by the hardcore tactics of the MVPDs? Where will more diverse voices, like my own, find a place to land? Will our stories be told?

Power strives to represent the diversity of New York City as it is—black, white, Latin, and Asian. The show is multilingual and multiethnic: even within our depiction of Spanish-speaking characters, we are specific about the slang and idiom of each country and culture: Dominican, Puerto Rican, Mexican, and more. Starz supports our effort to make our characters of all colors as real as possible, because the network is fearlessly committed to representing underserved audiences. Alongside our sister series *Survivor's Remorse*, we are the most diverse series cast in premium cable. In 2016, Starz's dedication to diversity shouldn't represent a kind of bravery, but sadly it still does. As a storyteller, I am grateful for the courage of our network to tell stories of people who haven't been represented before on premium cable—and to fight the large companies for a place at the table. I urge the FCC to support the independents in their quest for fair

treatment at the bargaining table—the diversity of our programming landscape depends upon it.

Sincerely,



Courtney A. Kemp