

MM 01-235

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HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON AGING

November 21, 2001

MMP
Broadcast
Ownership
0324

Ms. Sheryl Wilkerson
Director
Office of Legislative Affairs
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RECEIVED & INSPECTED
FEB 22 2002
FCC - MAILROOM

01-235

Dear Ms. Wilkerson:

I was contacted by my constituent, Ms. Stephanie Philbrick of Portland, Maine, regarding a recent FCC decision related to media ownership rules. Enclosed is a copy of her e-mail message for your review.

Ms. Philbrick is concerned about the impact of this decision on the media industry. I would appreciate it if you would explain the Commission's decision in this case and respond to the concerns Ms. Philbrick raises. Please send your response to the attention of Paul Howard in my Washington office.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

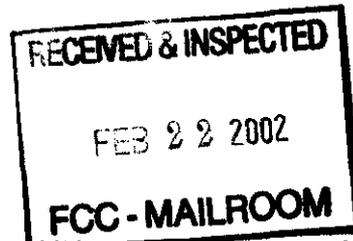
Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

SMC:pah

Enclosure

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Jan 28 9 04 AM '02



Date: 10/1/2001 3:46 PM
Sender: Stephanie Philbrick <Stephanie@schroff.com>
To: senator; olympia; Tom Allen <rep.tomallen@mail.house.gov>
Priority: Normal
Subject: radio/newspaper cross ownership

Dear Senators Snowe & Collins and Representative Allen,

I'm sure that you're receiving a lot of mail lately, but I'm going to add one more to your mailbag. Please give some consideration to the cross-ownership proposal from the FCC. I believe this to be a very important measure and of consequence to Mainers, in particular. It is very important that we do not allow even more consolidation of media outlets. American citizens, for all their freedoms, have very little access to independent media. Television, newspapers, radio and even the internet news is dominated by a few, wealthy organizations (or individuals). It is crucial in a state like Maine to prevent monopoly of media. We have long prized our individuality and independence here, but how can we preserve that if we only have one point of view to consider?

Please do what you can to prevent the FCC from allowing companies to own newspapers & radio stations in the same market. I would say that no one organization should own stakes in multiple forms of news/entertainment mediums -- but that has already happened. It is so important in this time of crisis that citizens have access to many sources of information and many points of view. How can we make informed decisions without knowing the many sides of a story? Anything else amounts to an institutional form of censorship: when very few control the news all other views are suppressed.

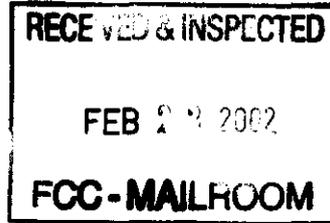
Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Stephanie Philbrick
15 Mabel Street
Portland, ME 04103



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

FEB 14 2002



CN0200324

Senator Susan M. Collins
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congresswoman Collins:

Thank you for forwarding the e-mail letter of your constituent, Ms. Stephanie Philbrick, regarding the Commission's review of its rule barring common ownership of a broadcast station and daily newspaper in the same market.

Pursuant to Congressional command, Section 202(h) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, requires the Commission to review all of its broadcast ownership rules:

The Commission shall review its rules adopted pursuant to this section and all of its ownership rules biennially as part of its regulatory reform review under section 11 of the Communications Act of 1934 and shall determine whether any of such rules are necessary in the public interest as the result of competition. The Commission shall repeal or modify any regulation it determines to be no longer in the public interest.

Pursuant to this section, the Commission, under the leadership of Chairman William E. Kennard, issued a Notice of Inquiry on March 12, 1998 on the broadcast rules, and in June of 2000, issued its first Biennial Ownership Report. In its findings, the Commission upheld retention of some of the rules, while also committing to review others in light of the significant changes in the media marketplace. For example, the prior Commission committed to initiate a rulemaking on the newspaper/broadcast cross ownership rule, and we have just initiated such a proceeding. A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking concerning the newspaper/broadcast cross-ownership rule was adopted by the Commission at its September 13, 2001 open meeting.

It is worth noting in the newspaper/broadcast cross ownership context, that the Commission will have the opportunity to examine and analyze the pros and cons of the restriction by evaluating real world examples, as opposed to engaging in theoretical debate. Over the years, the Commission has granted four permanent waivers of the rule, and there are currently approximately forty grandfathered newspaper/broadcast combinations. These markets

will give interested parties the unique opportunity to gather concrete facts and data, which then can be analyzed to determine any effect on competition and diversity.

Comments in the proceeding were due on December 8, 2002. Reply comments are due on February 15, 2002. The Commission will place Ms. Philbrick's e-mail in the record of the foregoing proceeding and review all comments carefully.

I hope that this is responsive to Ms. Philbrick's concerns.

Sincerely,



Roy J. Stewart
Chief, Mass Media Bureau