

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

Our own Grand Rapids Press printed an editorial in favor of loosening regulations. The editorial writer said, "There is already more diversity on television than most people can handle." I would agree that there is great diversity of mindless entertainment and commercials but minority voices are rarely heard and locally originated programming is pretty much limited to dumbed-down "news" programs. Even though most people use these local channels as their primary news source, recent local studies demonstrate the miniscule public service information that is presented. Many "news" stories promote their own network programs. Friends and acquaintances who work in TV news have told me that with each previous merger that has happened, fewer people are expected to do more work and shortcuts are employed to keep up the workload. I don't think my community can afford another merger. I would prefer to see more owners and more diversity of ownership.

I can see how allowing more mergers will make a few corporations richer but I can only see negative consequences for the community and even the individuals who work in media.