

To the Honorable Commissioners of the FCC,
I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, the Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. I am voicing my support to retain all the FCC rules in question. These rules set limits on concentration of the broadcast industry and serve the public interest by preserving diversity of ownership in the broadcast marketplace. These rules are: The Television-Radio Cross-Ownership Rule, The Broadcast-Newspaper Cross-Ownership Rule, The National Television Ownership Rule, The Duopoly Rule for Radio, The Local Television Ownership Rule, and The Dual Network Rule.

The great privilege to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events, both locally and globally, is part of the founding philosophy of this country. If the avenues for sharing information are restricted to very few, (not only in the media issues mentioned above but in restricting the use of the internet, as well) then I fear the quality of the information presented will decay. What is the value of varied information sources when they may be controlled by a single voice?

As a creator of independent media for nearly thirty years, and as a teacher at a public university in a department of film for 22 years, I know first hand the importance of freedom of expression. Already it is difficult to work outside the established system. If the channels to a potential audience - be they cable programming channels, local television stations, or even newspapers that promote and review independent works - fall into the hands of even fewer corporate owners, sharing my work or that of my colleagues and students will be even harder.

In such an environment, the commercial interest inevitably compromises the public interest. The FCC has rules limiting ownership to preserve the ecology of a healthy marketplace of ideas. If the FCC undermines this ecology by removing the rules, it undermines the future health of the marketplace of information.

Congress and the Supreme Court have long recognized that a functioning democracy depends on a media open to independent and unconventional news, and a varied entertainment media. Media makers working outside the corporate environment continually provide content that is so defined. This variety that stimulates the American people both causes us to constantly question the status quo, and facilitates the ability of Americans to speak with one another. If we exist in an environment in which our news outlets have merged together, both print and broadcast, our ability to open informed discussion is restricted.

I urge you to rule in the public interest on this matter. The public interest will be served by preserving the FCC's Broadcast Media ownership rules.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

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