

I am writing to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. I urge the FCC to retain all of the FCC rules in question. These rules, limiting concentration of the broadcast industry, serve the public interest by preserving diversity of ownership in the broadcast marketplace.

In order for our democratic republic to function as it was intended by the founding fathers there must be open and diverse access to all of the means of communication, and especially to those means of communication that have the greatest reach and power. FCC policy should work towards expanding the diversity and openness of communication media to the fullest extent possible. It should not open the door to a further contraction in the number of power brokers that can determine what information or entertainment will be available to American audiences.

As a long-time scholar of mass communication and the media industries I have watched with alarm as ownership and control of media outlets has steadily concentrated and narrowed. As that has happened, unconventional and independent media, and the diversity of voices that they represent, have been squeezed out of the available spectrum. Even cable television, once held out as a great hope for future diversity in the television "menu," has succumbed to the duplication of a narrow range of programming produced by an ever smaller number of operators and producers. My research, and the research and observations of hundreds of other scholars, has shown repeatedly and consistently that the concentration of media outlets and production in the hands of commercial mega-corporations has led, and continues to lead, to fewer and fewer possibilities for challenging, creative, or unconventional media form and content. To allow further concentration of media ownership and operation would be an abrogation of FCC responsibilities, and a great blow to the public interest.

I urge you to rule in the public interest on this matter, not in the interest of powerful commercial corporations and their lobbies. It is clear that the public interest will be served by perserving the FCC's Broadcast Media ownership rules.

Thank you for accepting my comments.

Sincerely,

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