

To Whom It May Concern:

In Youngstown, Ohio, we have suffered the political effects of radio consolidation through censorship by Clear Channel managers of discussion on local politics.

For example, I am black-listed by WKBN-AM from appearing on any of their talk shows. The reason for this black-listing is my outspoken opposition to radio consolidation, to Clear Channel's monopolistic practices in the local marketplace, and how the monopoly has distorted the political discourse. My black-listing can be overcome by the fact that I publish a business journal in Youngstown and can get my points of view out to the community. But other critics of Clear Channel, who don't own a newspaper, are also barred from appearing on their local talk shows. In fact, when Clear Channel provided free air time for more than two weeks (four hours, five days a week) for our imprisoned former congressman, Jim Traficant (then under indictment for bribery), to mount his PR defense, members of the Citizens League of Greater Youngstown were denied access to tapes of those broadcast, and we were denied our request to appear on the station in rebuttal. Moreover, no mechanism was set up for Traficant to be seriously questioned by any journalist during his free air time. Indeed, Clear Channel used Traficant to gain market share and advertising revenue, and failed to monitor or clarify any of his lies. And Traficant used Clear Channel to launch his defense prior to the start of his trial. All of this was done in an effort to gain audience and ad revenues. Had rebuttal opportunities been provided, Clear Channel could have provided a community service. But instead, it acted in monopolistic fashion and in so doing, provided a disservice to a community enduring corruption charges lodged against its congressman. There are many more examples of how a market monopoly has damaged local political discourse via talk radio. When considering additional deregulation of the broadcast industry, the FCC should look at the aftermath of radio consolidation and recognize that ownership rules still in place MUST STAY IN PLACE.

The examples cited in this comment have this analogy: A citizens group formed to promote public use of the national parks is barred by the operator of the public parks from using the parks or standing on park grounds to publicly announce criticism of park operations.

The situation in Youngstown, Ohio, is destructive to the political discourse in Youngstown, Ohio.

Thank you for this opportunity to present a comment.

Yours truly,

Andrea Wood

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