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.

The FCC must protect the interests of the citizens.

They key word here is "CITIZEN" -- NOT "CONSUMER!" As a consumer, I'm not particularly worried about having a myriad of channels to watch or newspapers or magazines to read. But, as a citizen, I greatly fear being held captive to corporations who own most everything I see, read, or listen to. I fear that I won't be exposed to news that may be at odds with the corporate viewpoint. I fear that my media will put their corporate interests in profits ahead of the public interest. Who, if not the FCC, will prevent this?

It seems to me that the FCC's leadership is content with simply "hoping" that big media companies will not take advantage of their power. However, we cannot simply hope that if we give media corporations the unfettered ability to colonize the media landscape, they will use their newly gained power and influence responsibly.

Our democracy is too important! I beg you not to take the risk that media consolidation won•t inhibit media diversity or access.

Owners of big media outlets have an inordinate amount of power to direct public attention and influence public opinion. Having only a tiny handful of such owners is outright dangerous. We have the First Amendment to protect us from government censorship. But, what do we have to protect us from corporate censorship?

Let•s look at network television•s coverage of this debate. It would seem that the FCC engaging in one of the most substantive reviews of media ownership restrictions since its inception would be a potentially newsworthy item. The consequences to our democracy notwithstanding, certainly the relaxation of these media ownership limits is, at the very least, profoundly important business news. However, only one of the major television networks (ABC) has given any television coverage to this issue at all. This coverage was broadcast at 4:30 am! Given this, the vast majority of the American public remains completely ignorant of this issue. And, that•s just how the big media companies want it.

Most Americans in the know are against the loosening of media ownership restrictions. So, for media companies, it•s best if the public doesn•t know.

Industry analysts argue that current media ownership restrictions are outdated and unnecessary given the advent of new technologies such as cable television and the Internet. The new media landscape, they say, is much different than the old.

Certainly, the Internet and its millions of channels has much to offer American democracy. But, it seems to me that the democratizing features of the Internet are more rhetoric than reality. Today, in a medium that many people thought would resist consolidation, only 4 companies control over 50% of user minutes online.

Please, our democracy is too important to hand the debate over to a few media corporations.