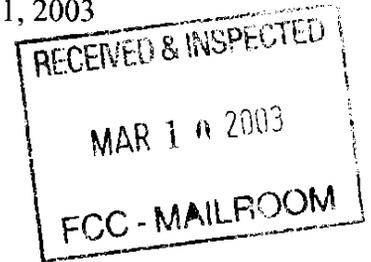


Steven P. Alpert
17 Meadowbrook Lane
Suffern, New York 10901

March 1, 2003



Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Sirs:

I wanted to take this opportunity to contact you about the review of the "station ownership rules" as per FCC docket 02-277.

In the mid-1980's, I graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts Institute of Film And Television. In various radio and television classes there, I learned (among other things) about the wide gamut of broadcast laws then in effect, which included strict station ownership limits. At the time, the ownership limit was 7 AM, 7 FM, and 7 TV stations for a single entity.

However, under section 202 of the Telecommunications Act Of 1996, that limit was altogether removed, (although other regulations were put in place mandating caps of broadcast stations in one market, and percentages nationally, that can be owned by one entity). It is these rules that the Federal Communications Commission is currently looking to do away with.

While the FCC may not have foreseen the end result of this rule change when it was implemented back in 1996, hindsight ought to be "20-20", and indeed, the commission ought to completely restore the prior rules based on the actual (versus the intended) results.

Clearly stated in that same section 202 of the 1996 act is the following important statement:

(h) FURTHER COMMISSION REVIEW- The Commission shall review its rules adopted pursuant to this section and all of its ownership rules biennially as part of its regulatory reform review under section 11 of the Communications Act of 1934 and shall determine whether any of such rules are necessary in the public interest as the result of competition. The Commission shall repeal or modify any regulation it determines to be no longer in the public interest.

It is rather obvious that the end result of the elimination of the pre-Telecommunications Act Of 1996 ownership caps has resulted in massive consolidation of the broadcast media. This has come at a huge cost: the virtual elimination of local origination of programming, especially on the radio. Additionally, editorials (and editorial replies) have become a thing of the past. This can be blamed to some degree on the subsequent repeal of the so-called "Fairness Doctrine". It is ironic that this was repealed to *increase* the ability of broadcasters to air "controversial material".

That has not been the net effect, since consolidation has in fact prevented most if not all controversial programming or comments over the air that may in any way be perceived as going against the grain of the corporate parent. With the current state of affairs in this regard, the public has in effect been silenced, and restricted to only have access to hear one point of view on a topic, even if it might be potentially controversial (if people with alternate viewpoints had the opportunity to illustrate this fact). Instead, people are resigned to accept what they hear or see in the media as “fact” when in actuality, what they are being exposed to may actually be corporate propaganda.

The net result is a stifling of public opinion on the airwaves, and therefore a single-mindedness of programming and the presentation slant of local and national newscasts. This is inherently bad for the American public, and completely contrary to the intended use of broadcasting for the “public interest, convenience and/or necessity”. I am enclosing an article from the New York Times, which illustrates an intriguing perspective on this topic.

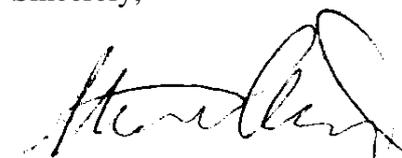
With all due respect for the current administration in Washington, the public ought to be able to hear a (hypothetical) song on the radio that offers a critical viewpoint of our government. The first amendment guarantees this. It should be easy for a hit recording artist to produce such a song and receive subsequent radio air play. Even though the opinions expressed in the song may not be agreeable to all. If current rules are in effect preventing open display of such ~~art~~ forms and viewpoints for any reason (such as corporate hegemony), then pursuant to section 202 (h), these 1996 rule changes must be repealed.

With all the evidence that has been presented on this matter by the general public during various hearings on this and similar matters, it is quite apparent that the intent versus the results of the 1996 rules ought to be revisited, and those 1996 rules that have enabled just a few large corporations to control what we as a nation of diverse people are exposed to in the media, must be repealed immediately.

The airwaves are owned by the public, not the corporations. The only way to guarantee the public has a voice on these airwaves, regardless of their opinions, is to insure many different, unconnected owners of broadcast licenses. The current state of affairs has enabled just the opposite, resulting in the public not having the opportunity to hear differing viewpoints. Multiple perspectives on a controversial subject is the only way that the public can have the tools to decide for themselves which opposing perspective to ally themselves with. The Federal Communications Commission dealt a great blow to this ability with the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Hopefully it will make the right moves, and correct this problem.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (845) 357-6975. Thank you for the opportunity to express my comments on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven P. Alpert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Steven P. Alpert