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Statement of L. Brent Bozell III, President  
Parents Television Council

Broadcast Ownership En Banc  
Federal Communications Commission

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Federal Communications Commission  
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Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, and fellow panelists,

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for inviting me to address the Commission's Broadcast Ownership En Banc Hearing to discuss diversity issues and the topic of media consolidation. but I confess at the start that I do so with a certain degree of trepidation

There is, for starters, the angst one feels when his libertarian sensibilities are assaulted by the mere thought of federal intervention into ownership of private property. It's probably safe to say that I have never taken a position that does anything other than advocate open markets, unfettered by government regulation. It would follow, then, that as technology advances in the world of communications and presents new opportunities for expansion, we should rejoice and not interfere with the opportunities provided those who would enter into this market. Logic dictates that these many new vehicles would provide for many new opportunities

Chairman Powell believes this is what has resulted. In his recent interview with the *Hollywood Reporter*, he states "Our statistics are that since 1960 [here's been something like a 195% increase in outlets and a 139% increase in independent owners." Chairman Powell goes on to say "the truth is, by almost any measure, that there are more networks than there ever were before. There are more television stations than there ever were before. There are more independent owners." On the face of it, it would seem that deregulation has worked and media consolidation is but a mythology.

But then one scratches the surface, digging a little deeper—in this case looking at the FCC's own statistics—and a different picture emerges. In the past 25 years the number of TV station owners has declined from 500 to 360. There has been a massive increase in the number of cable channels, yet almost three quarters of them are now owned by only six corporate entities, four of which are major TV networks. Four entities—AOL/Time Warner, ATT/Liberty, ABC/Disney, and CBS/Viacom—dominate the most popular cable programming as well as prime time network shows. Six entities control approximately two thirds of all viewers.

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While overall cable viewing is on the rise, the broadcast networks continue to dominate. The top twenty or so TV shows are all prime time **network** programs. They fill about three quarters of the weekly prime time viewing hours.

The Commission's own research is devastatingly clear: "Since there are approximately 106 million TV households, the average number of networks available is over 50 per household. This sounds like a huge number. However, when we examine the ownership of these networks, we discover that almost three quarters of them — serving approximately 4 billion subscribers — are owned by six corporate entities. The four major TV networks, NBC, ABC, CBS, Fox, and the two dominant cable providers, AOL/Time Warner and ATT/Liberty, completely dominate the tuner."

And finally, "the Big Three networks went from an ownership share of programming of 17% in 1989 to 48% in 2002 through growth and mergers."

This is not what deregulation was intended to accomplish

Obviously the Commission cares a great deal about the diversity issue. Obviously the industry cares a great deal too.

But what about the public, about which this Commission and the industry profess to serve? The Parents Television Council has over 750,000 members nationwide. I can only venture a guess, but I suspect that if a survey were taken of them, asking them what they believe is the most important issue concerning television today, not one percent would point to diversity and media consolidation.

But I know what does top their list. Like the average American family, they are disgusted, revolted, fed up, horrified—I don't know how else to underscore this—by the raw sewage, the ultraviolence, the *graphic sex*, the *raunchy language* that is flooding into their living rooms day and night through the television screen, and poisoning the minds of an entire generation of youngsters whose parents' concerns are dismissed by an industry that admonishes them instead to stand guard over the sets, perhaps with a baseball bat, to keep impressionable children away.

Now ask the media behemoths how important the issue of indecency is to them. I wonder if you will find one executive—I don't know of a one—who will even speak out about it publicly, much less do a thing to stop it.

And sadly, what is the Federal Communications Commission's record on the decency issue? After all, indecency on broadcast TV between the hours of 6 AM and 10 PM, when children are likely to be watching, is against the law. And the FCC is charged by Congress with enforcing that law. How many stations in the continental U.S. has it fined over the years since its enforcement division was formed for broadcasting indecent material? According to our research of the FCC's website, the answer is ... none.

So I would ask the Commission to consider this: If the public good is what is driving this debate, then the Commission ought to consider what it is the public wants, not what network elites want. The public is demanding that television shape up and stop poisoning the culture. Our hope is that as the Commission debates the diversity and media consolidation issue, it keeps at the forefront the one question that really matters: What is the formula that will safeguard the rights of families?