

It is urgent that the FCC restrain from relaxing the rules further regarding broadcast ownership. The FCC is mandated to ensure that the broadcast spectrum be reserved to serve the public interest; this interest is NOT served when a small number of large, multinational corporations own a large percentage of broadcast outlets within a single market.

The impact of one company owning a dominant number of media outlets has already been felt in the radio industry. Clear Channel Communications, which owns radio stations across the country and multiple stations within given markets, currently exerts a dominant and pervasive force on whose music gets played. And, with their crossover ownership of performance venues, can to a large extent determine which music will become popular, and then ensure that this music is performed at their venues. This is not in the public interest, but rather a sign of a trend toward consolidation of power in the hands of the few.

Do not let this same trend be spread to ownership of television stations. The end result is less local programming -- as is evident in Clear Channel's and Radio One's radio programming -- and a reduced diversity of voices and ideas in the media marketplace.

Americans rely upon their media for news, information, and ideas; our ability to ensure that this marketplace of ideas is a full one, and represents many segments of our population, is based upon the assumption that there is a diversity in ownership of media outlets.

Relaxing the media ownership rules further runs counter to the public interest, and to the needs of the American people.

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