

I agree with the concerns discussed in FCC commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein's talk "Big Macs and Big Media" on May 20, 2003. I am concerned that the loss of diversity, localism, and competition that we are already experiencing in the media will be accelerated and completed by removing the rules that limit ownership of multiple media outlets. I believe this will seriously adversely affect our ability to function as a democracy since our sources of information are becoming cut off and concentrated in the hands of a few power brokers. Here in the Chicago area, one of our larger newspapers, as far as I can tell, has not covered issues in the FCC June 2 review, except in a few minor articles. Recently I discovered that several TV stations in the Chicago area have the same owner: I had been assuming that they were independent. I have also been stunned to learn that radio stations that I thought were independent have the same owner. At the times of elections, we depend on media information sources when we try to make intelligent voting choices. The various media exhibit their own biases in selection and presentation of information. This also extends to the selection of programming: the circumstances of removal of Bill Maher's TV program "Politically Incorrect" and the "almost" removal of ABC's "Nightline" come to mind. The movement toward consolidating these sources under one source of control that we are not even aware of jeopardizes our fundamental rights and liberties. The FCC has an awesome responsibility to get the facts straight, to think this through carefully, to resist political pressure, and to act in the interests of all the people of the United States of America.