

I support media diversity

I am sending one last letter today to try and delay any decision on relaxing media ownership rules. I am a freelance writer, and active consumer of "alternative media." I am also a subscriber to basic cable service, and the WebTV internet service (read MSN).

Diversity of programming in all media is ALREADY suffering, especially in television and magazines. Executives assume everyone subscribes to "standard" cable for example. As a result, ABC feels it is no issue to boot most of its NBA basketball games to its ESPN and TNT co-conspirators. Even the all-star game was on TNT. At the rate we are going NOW, virtually everything will be pay-per-view in ten years.

As a writer, I find markets for my work (mostly about natural history, but not environmental issues), shrinking. "International Wildlife" magazine became extinct late last year, for example.

Please give thoughtful consideration to the above, and to the remainder of this letter. Remember that all we are asking is for a longer window for public discourse on this extremely important topic.

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In its goals to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate the negative affects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity. While there may be indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented have become more limited.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

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