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May 9, 2003

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street
Room TW-B204
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Docket 02-277 Media Ownership Policy Re-examination

Dear Ms. Salas:

I would like to submit this public comment on Docket 02-277 regarding the Media Ownership Policy Re-examination.

I am a school librarian. For the past 8 years I have taught media literacy to 13-year-old students. Much of their daily education about the world comes through the media. Further consolidation of media ownership will limit their programming choices, especially their exposure to local resources and talent, diversity of opinions, ethnic communities, and a worldview undistorted by commercialism.

Even with the current ownership rules, children need to be taught to "read" the media. They must learn how to choose and use media appropriately, in order to avoid the harmful effects of deceptive marketing, media violence, and inappropriate content. It will be impossible to provide any "special oversight" for children if media ownership is further concentrated and unregulated.

Finally, democracy means government by the people, not by the media. Media conglomerates are not individual citizens. They are not voted into public office by public elections. Why should they have power and influence so much greater than individual citizens? Individual citizens who vote and pay taxes should have equal voice in a democracy. Further media consolidation will diminish this equal access. It will hinder the freedom and ability of individual citizens to participate in local and national affairs because their voices will not be able to be heard if conglomerate media does not agree with them.

Thank you for hearing my concerns, especially those on behalf of my students.

Sincerely,

Patricia F. Cooney
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