



# NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Chairman Michael Powell  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
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Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: 2002 Biennial Regulatory Review - Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 MB Docket No. 02-277; Cross-Ownership of Broadcast Stations and Newspapers MM Docket No. 01-235; Rules and Policies Concerning Multiple Ownership of Radio Broadcast Stations in Local Markets MM Docket No. 01-317; Definition of Radio Markets MM Docket No. 00-244**

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners:

I call on the Federal Communications Commission not to relax or repeal the Commission's broadcast ownership rules.

Our country resides in a state of economic uncertainty, to which greater consolidation is not the answer. As I have underscored in testimony before the Commission, consolidation disadvantages small businesses and disservices consumers. Deregulation will crush the foundation of the public interest: competition, localism and diversity of ownership. Deregulation, once undertaken, tends to be irreversible even hindsight proves it to have been a mistake.

In the broadcast industry, we continually see media conglomerates buy more and more stations. Too few people already own too many media outlets. If the FCC relaxes the broadcast ownership rules, opportunities for minority owners and new entrants will dry up as investment capital seeks out the older, larger companies that the FCC rules favor.

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Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., *Founder & President*  
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**Chairman Michael Powell**

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The potential of deregulation would probably destroy any future of minorities owning radio and television stations. After 1999, when the FCC partially deregulated local TV ownership, minority ownership went from 33 owners to 20 owners. If the FCC further deregulates the broadcast ownership rules, large media conglomerates will become even larger. Consumers will have access to fewer independent viewpoints. Without consumers' awareness, their news will have been filtered through the same news desk.

Not only do we need to keep the broadcast ownership rules as they stand now, we need to adopt legislation such as Senator John McCain's recently introduced *Telecommunications Ownership Diversification Act of 2003*. I applaud Senator McCain's efforts to encourage broadcast and telecommunications ownership by underrepresented groups such as minorities, women and small businesses. It is becoming extremely difficult for minority and women owned businesses to compete with major corporations in trying to purchase assets. Providing investors and sellers with tax incentives to do business with small businesses allows them a chance at the table.

We have seen what tax incentives can do to help diversify ownership. In 1978, when the original tax certificate legislation was created, there were 59 minority owned radio stations and one minority owned TV station. Between 1978 and 1995, minority ownership increased to 300 stations, a five fold increase in less than a generation. Since 1995, when the tax certificate program ended, minority TV ownership has decreased. The number of minority owned radio has increased slightly, but the number of minority radio owners has decreased 20%.

Until we level the playing field with regulations that limit consolidation while encouraging diversity of ownership, the Federal Communications Commission can never be faithful to the public interest in promoting competition, diversity and localism.

Sincerely,



Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.

cc: Marlene Dortch  
Office of the Secretary