The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Room B-B201  
Washington, D.C. 20554-0001  

Dear The Honorable Powell:  

As both a seven-term Democratic Congressman representing the Bronx and a Hispanic, I have long championed issues important to the Hispanic community. I therefore feel compelled to write to you regarding the pending merger between Univision Communications Inc. and Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation.  

I am proud of the growth of the Hispanic community and the significant contributions the community has made to our country, and I fully support efforts to better serve this population. Given my experience and knowledge of Univision and HBC, I believe that the proposed merger would benefit Hispanics nationwide and would continue the great strides that Univision and HBC have made towards placing Spanish-language media on par with larger, English-language media companies. Granting the proposed merger would allow Univision and HBC to combine their resources to better compete for viewers, listeners, and advertisers in the same manner that Viacom/Infinity, ABC/Disney, NBC/Telemundo, and others have done. Ultimately, I am confident that the merged company will continue to expand opportunities for Hispanic viewers and listeners.  

I am therefore alarmed by the efforts of some to segregate by regulation those broadcast stations that choose to serve Hispanic audiences. Subjecting stations which serve a particular ethnic, racial, religious, or gender group to disparate regulatory treatment is offensive to all Americans. The idea of creating a “separate but unequal” category of Spanish-formatted stations is one that I wholeheartedly oppose.  

In reviewing this transaction, the FCC should apply the same rules that it applies to any other merger. Those who call upon the FCC to proclaim Hispanics a “separate market” and to apply a different set of rules to broadcasters that choose to format their stations to serve this audience espouse a poor and morally indefensible policy. Hispanic viewers and listeners deserve better.
August 8, 2003

Those who would deny Univision and HBC this opportunity to improve their service to the public and to compete effectively with English-language media conglomerates do so at the expense of all Hispanics.

Given that this merger has received more scrutiny than most mergers reviewed by the FCC including AOL/Time Warner, NBC/Telemundo and others, and since the FCC’s self-imposed 180 merger review time line has long passed, I urge the Commission to proceed with a decision on this transaction.

Please include this letter in the public record of your deliberations.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

José E. Serrano
Member of Congress

JES:kdd