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515 WEST 207th ST  
 NEW YORK, NY 10034  
 tel. 212.544.2400  
 fax 212.544.0248

www.audubonpartnership.org

July 1, 2004

ORIGINAL

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

Dear Commissioners:

04-207

RE: MB Docket No. ~~04-207~~

Each day I have the opportunity to see some of the very best and brightest stars in the Dominican community – they approach my organization with dreams of business ownership and the resolve to see them through. However, these powerful role models are not typically the portraits of Latinos I see when I return home to watch TV.

That is why I write to express my concern regarding the issue of *a la carte* pricing for cable television, which would most certainly reduce, rather than expand, the diversity of programming on cable television.

As the Commission noted when it opened the above-referenced docket, an *a la carte* pricing scheme could have unintended negative consequences for cable programming diversity. Despite the growing number of cable networks and programs embracing Latino characters and issues, positive, realistic images remain rare exceptions to the rule. Clearly there is a need for more – not less – programming aimed at Latinos as well as an environment in which struggling networks that provide quality programming can find a voice.

Any move to implement *a la carte* pricing, now more than ever, would be a mistake. As you undoubtedly are aware, a recent pilot of Nielsen Media Research’s “Local People Meter” dramatically reduced the ratings calculations for minority broadcasts across the board, notably Spanish language networks like Telemundo and Univisión – the two highest-rated channels in their market. A number of voices here in New York, myself included, called this undercounting a “disenfranchisement of viewers on a massive scale.”

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If ratings for Latino-oriented programs are perceived as declining, a network's ability to raise advertisement revenue would naturally diminish, potentially spurring on the death of the programs popular in our communities.

The same is true in the *a la carte* setting. Advertisers will spend fewer dollars on *niche* networks when there is a decline in viewership, which is precisely what will occur if viewers chose only a small handful of the most popular channels. Once advertisers reign in their spending, smaller networks will not survive, stripping the cable medium of valuable minority voices.

As someone who represents the interest of Latino small businesses, I have an additional concern not directly mentioned in your inquiry. I fear that as Latino-focused networks struggle to survive under any *a la carte* law, the many small businesses who support these networks -- studios, talent agencies, crews and the like -- will suffer, potentially eliminating jobs in the Latino community.

I hope the Commission will consider my comments and protect the growing diversity of voices on television. In doing so, you will also protect the entrepreneurial spirit that thrives on cable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walther Delgado', written in a cursive style.

Walther Delgado  
Executive Director