

I attended the recent FCC Public Forum in Monterey but was unable to verbally present my testimony to the panel. Attached below is the complete text. Thank you for your time and consideration. Mike Pippi

FCC Testimony Prepared for July 21 Public Hearing in Monterey, CA: -
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My name is Mikel Pippi and I stand before you as both a concerned local citizen and a broadcast industry professional who has witnessed a sea change over the past several years in the way our mainstream American media and entertainment industries are owned and controlled, and the growing influence of our current administration's governmental agenda on the programming we are allowed to hear and see.

In the late 1990's I served as an Executive for the Walt Disney Company in Los Angeles, California when ABC was acquired by Disney. From 1992 through 1995, I lived and worked in Moscow, Russia for Turner Broadcasting just prior to its merger with AOL/Time Warner. I assisted with the privatization of Russia's television channels.

Ironically what I witnessed during the last days of State owned and centrally-controlled media in Communist Russia is what I am witnessing again today in the USA. Citizens too often get to see only what the administration and its supporters who own these media outlets want them to see in an effort to shape their opinions and limit their knowledge and decision making capabilities.

Our daily mainstream news most often offers pre-digested opinions not true reporting, as well as unfair and biased slices of the whole picture of the world we live in. The slanted political perspectives on Fox News are frequently also mirrored on ABC, NBC and CBS. Even local news affiliates suffer the same fate as they broadcast stories provided them from a central corporate source in order to save money and generate larger profits. Where is true reporting?

If you can find them, tune into Public Broadcasting's "BBC World News" or "NOW" with Bill Moyers or Pacifica Network's "Democracy Now" with Amy Goodman, and you will see that the facts represented are strikingly different and multi-faceted. Thank God, for local affiliates KUSP and KAZU and PBS TV. They provide a true public service.

Also, the issue is not only the domination of the now vertically integrated major media outlets by a powerful few ...which we must

and can curtail by enforcing pre-existing anti-trust laws; but also just who owns these corporations and these individuals' close financial, personal and ideological relationships to leaders within our government structures. The line between public and private good is being blurred.

Here are a few examples of how our current government administration and its private sector media partners are censoring what we see:

1. Recently due to pressure from the Republican administration CBS was publicly ridiculed and privately pressured into not airing a mediocre mini-series on President Ronald Reagan which the GOP felt portrayed the President in a less than favorable light.
2. Clear Channel, the Texas owned company that has the largest radio network on the planet, (as well as numerous concert venues and billboards), boycotted the playing of music by the Dixie Chicks after an anti-Bush remark by one of its band members. This sent a shock wave of self-censorship throughout the music industry. Don't mess with Big Brother or your career is in jeopardy.
3. Relatedly, Disney Studios was persuaded not to distribute Michael Moore's "Feirenheight 9/11" by governmental pressure but publicly sighted the fact that it was not a "family film" for its reason to pull distribution. (Even with the company's history of distributing numerous topical adult oriented films.)

We should be outraged. Since when has government in collusion with its business partners had control over the content of our media, our arts and our freedom of speech? Open, free, truly objective news and entertainment are necessary for an informed populace and are the foundations of our basic democracy. Without them we face a future no better than those who suffered fear and suppression under the state controlled media of the old USSR or other current dictatorships.

Americans must stand up for their constitutional rights now or they will be lost for generations to come. Decentralize our media NOW before its too late. Thank you. End-

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