

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,

As a citizen who wants to be informed about the political and electoral issues that affect my life, I am greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television and in some instances radio programming which is available today.

Let me say upfront, that, I consider NPR radio programming in general to be very substantive and responsible in its coverage and that effort is made to be non-partisan and inclusive in hosting guests and receiving callers' comments.

However, I am concerned by reports by PIRG that much local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent--constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. More than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story. Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

I request that the FCC define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

Again, an exception is our local radio station (KWMU) which does carry substantive and informative national and local programs related to the elections and governments in general.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

I would want the actual coverage to be ABOUT THE ISSUES, and request some kind of "PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES" OR "ROBERTS RULES OF ORDERS" type regulations be established for coverage instead of endless repeating of the charges and attacks, and opinions.

Additionally, I would like to see a thorough study be done of overt bias and vitriole which exists in talk shows, on TV and radio. While I usually choose NOT to watch or listen to programs that "trash" other people, I've heard enough to know it's out there and I am very concerned about the long term effect this is having on our electorate and the choices being made at the polls, as well as our youth--the future of our great democracy. Uninformed bias, vitriolic comments and opinion are not the best basis for making our decisions. Please work to establish more effective parameters, including a return to "good old-fashioned" courtesy to be practiced across the board in reporting or commenting on every news story, or public figure.

It strikes me as ironic that there was so much outrage about the half-time Super Bowl incident (justified of course) and so little outrage about the "trashing" of others which is aired daily in talk shows. These are equally, perhaps even more, demeaning and undermining in their negativity and lack of respect. If parents and teachers are expected to teach respect, courtesy, and openmindedness within families and within schoole, why isn't the TV, radio, and the Press expected to abide by the same standards. We can learn to disagree with each other without all the negativity. Respectful discourse is the basis for a strong democracy.

Mr.Powell, as a person with the position to make a difference in these matters, you can lead the charge to d elevate the standards for broadcasting.

Thank you for considering my comments and for working toward setting Standards of Excellence through respectful and accurate, non-biased reporting which deals with the SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OF OUR TIMES--this is vitally important to preserving our democracy in providing informative, respectful programming for all of us to make enlightened choices when we go to the polls and as we live our lives daily.

Sincerely,

Clare Laune

Clare Laune
16651 Caulks Creek Ridge
Chesterfield, MO 630056546