Will the autumn of 2004 mark the passing of even a pretense of democracy gracing what's left of the Republic Mr. Franklin and friends gave us if we could keep it and plunge unashamedly into a de facto plutocracy?

When Sinclair Broadcasting determines that announcing the names of our valiant dead and wounded Armed Services personnel is not news (or newsworthy) and the mandatory broadcast of a politically charged documentary "Open Wounds etc." is not a political ad, but rather, "news" indicates an agenda that does not serve the public interest.

For example, will "Open Wounds..." cover the collaboration of Senators Kerry and McCain on the Foreign Relations Committee to resolve the Viet Nam POW MIA rumors and rage that ultimately allowed thousands of bereft Americans to begin their grieving process and heal "open wounds"? If not, the point of view of the documentary is not balanced and presenting is as news verges on scandal.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air this documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.

Sincerely,

David Cherveny