

To: Federal Communications Commission

I would like to submit these comments to the FCC's "Notice of Proposed Rulemaking" 05-311 on "video franchising".

Local franchising is an essential freedom of speech very much necessary here in Olympia, as well as everywhere else in this Republic called the United States of America. Franchises ensure that local citizens and communities have control over the telecommunications and media in their area, and that telecommunications companies are accountable to the needs of consumers. Without local franchises local communities will be stripped of an adequate way to make sure companies charge reasonable rates, respond to customer complaints, or that they provide universal service.

Local franchises are also cornerstone in the operation of Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) TV. PEG TV provides the important service of supporting localism in the media, and the making and airing of programs that reflect the diversity of our Constitutionally guaranteed American life. Public Access TV is very important in providing a place where the public can be informed about local government affairs; and where individuals and community organizations can express their viewpoints and opinions. Democracy works best when the widest range of ideas possible is made available to all people, and Public Access TV plays an important role in doing this.

As a supporter of Public Access TV in Olympia, I strongly urge the FCC to rule for the maintenance of local franchises. This democratic video media transmission, franchised as it now exists, is the only island of democratic governance left - any move to control this last vestige is equivalent to a fascist coup.

Regards  
Stanley Stahl