

I am writing to express my strong disapproval of any relaxation or elimination of the public interest limits on media ownership. Localism and diversity are the cornerstones of a democratic media system, and we cannot afford to compromise them in any way.

Limits on media consolidation have been a bulwark against the concentration of economic power in the marketplace of ideas -- a critical part of balancing the public service mission of the media with their private profit motive. Our democracy requires the free flow of information from a broad range of diverse voices.

Any public policy seeking to protect diversity in the media must recognize the simple fact that ownership matters. Media consolidation has already led to declines in local and minority ownership as well as the homogenization of content in radio and television. Permitting cross-ownership of newspapers and broadcast stations, or allowing further concentration in local television markets, will only worsen the problems we already have.

When the FCC attempted to weaken and remove media ownership limits in 2003, millions of Americans rose up in protest. Congress and the courts ultimately intervened to turn back that misguided regulatory process.

Now that these same rules are being reconsidered, the FCC should stand firm with the public against further concentration of media ownership in the hands of the few. A vote against media consolidation is a vote for democracy.

ADDENDUM: While the above is a prepared commentary that may be submitted by many people, I have read it carefully and I support this view in a reasoned and conscientious way, as an individual citizen. I am equally or even more concerned about the current attempt by a small handful of cable and telephone service providers who wish to end network neutrality on the internet and become gatekeepers of content, charging not only service fees to individual users for the maintenance of lines, but charging content providers essentially PROTECTION MONEY for life in the fast and more usable lane on the internet. This not only threatens big independent commercial competitors like Google and Vonage, it threatens any number of very small internet businesses that run on a shoestring budget. It also threatens private charities that accept donations on the internet and run on almost zero budget. If these great and diverse smaller entities are forced into an internet slowlane that no one wants to use, it will be a huge injustice. Even more so, the free flow of information on the internet, and the access for citizen journalists and diverse voices to be heard by the greatest number, this must be preserved at any cost. I do not want my government to control the content of what I can see, hear and read. Equally, I don't want that control handed over to media conglomerates or cable and telephone companies. Network Neutrality on the internet and strict rules against concentration of media ownership in radio, television, and newspapers is vital to our democracy. The roll of the FCC

and the federal government should be entirely concerned and circumscribed in the maintenance of first amendment liberties in all media.

Thank you.