

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.

Few could doubt the obvious truth that media ownership matters and determines the content we receive over the public airwaves. We need look no farther than the recent scandal over ABC's "docudrama" about the 9/11 attacks which willfully distorted history about a national tragedy for political reasons. We need local broadcast station owners who will serve the local public interest not those of faraway corporate owners. Stewardship of the public airwaves is a very serious responsibility that merits true public accountability.

Limits on media consolidation have been a bulwark against the concentration of economic power in the arena of speech: television, radio, the Internet. Our democracy requires the free flow of information from a broad range of diverse voices. But in fact the vast corporate consolidation, the power it wields over Congress and over Presidential elections, the unchecked power of multinationals to do what they want in neo-liberalism's "free market" in fact constitutes a new, American, form of fascism. Fascism strictly defined means control of government and all avenues of public expression by corporations and the military.

America is long since there.

The latest wrinkle here is simply a confirmation of that fact. We have reached the point articulated in our Declaration of Independence, where it talks about tyranny. The American people are now living under tyranny: a tyranny of the Cheney-Bush-Rumsfeld cabal, a tyranny that WILL have its wars when it wants them, that WILL ignore billions of demonstrators, contemptuously calling them "a focus group." A tyranny that owns the media, places its personnel in key positions of control (why bother to call it "leadership?" It is totalitarianism.) Sooner or later the American Empire in its arrogance, its hubris, its brutality and its vast stupidity regarding relations with other nations, will drag itself down and drown of its own weight. Its decline is hallmarked by a rich-poor gap unparalleled since the turn of the last century; the rampant decline in all social services first and foremost health and housing; a decaying infrastructure; public schools going down the tubes and an average educational level that, in the world's only remaining superpower, should be an embarrassment in the eyes of the world; a rampant clamp-down on "permissible speech;" and, yes, a media where reporters are now "embedded" with the military in countries attacked by the US, making of the US media the counterpart to Pravda or any other totalitarian nation's propaganda machine. Unfortunately all of us go with it.

Meanwhile we have these "blips," as here: more multinational rule-the-media-by-corporate-divine-decree, more pandering of right-wing lies, the same sort that got us into Iraq.

I and millions like me oppose this. 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.