

I agree fully with what was already written in this space, and am adding my own comments as well.

We the people own the airwaves, and we allow broadcasters to make obscene profits on them. In exchange, broadcasters are supposed to serve the public interest. When a few corporations control everything, they do not act in the public interest. We already see broadcasters censoring political ad content that they don't agree with, while giving free airtime to promoting their own viewpoints. This is extremely damaging to democracy because information is all slanted the same way, and one must search hard to find opposing viewpoints. All news becomes opinion--there are no facts.

Because of this and other things, 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 any further.

Where I live we have lost many independent voices over the years including our local jazz station and the two formerly locally owned Black stations. The radio is like the strip malls--you can't tell where you are by listening or looking around. It's the same everywhere you go.

Radio stations don't do news at the top of the hour anymore, unless they are network news stations, and with the exception of Pacifica and KFOG, everybody's music playlists are the same. No one plays local music any longer, even though we in the Bay Area have a very active music scene with incredible talent across genres.

Media consolidation has already gone too far and needs to be rolled back. We also need a return to the fairness doctrine. As it is now, fewer voices are being heard than in the past, and we are all poorer for it.

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.