

I'm writing to request that the FCC, in its reconsideration of media ownership rules, be particularly attentive to the negative impact of higher levels of consolidation of media outlets in a few hands.

I understand that economies of scale would argue that consolidated media channels permit the allocation of more resources to the coverage of news, for example, and therefore theoretically improving quality. Yet that same consolidation almost inevitably produces a dilution of diversity of approaches to news and fosters a cookie-cutter repetition of approaches that are judged to be even modestly economically better than others.

I would like to see the FCC continue to encourage for all areas of the country a robust set of local news outlets (print, radio, TV) with separately owned channels of communication, and the continued availability of several national news channels (print, radio, TV) which are independently owned.

Much as my blood pressure rises when I hear some of the opinions expressed in various media channels, I fully recognize that the danger of a uniform, unchallenged and frankly uncompetitive set of media channels serving a specific area - even if I support their opinions - is detrimental to our national health.

I am sure there are compelling lessons of business efficiency that are being hurled at the FCC in an effort to foster more consolidation. Those arguments are perfectly valid in a free market, capitalist context, and have often served our economy well. But the air waves the FCC oversees in particular are an important and limited resource for our country, and the same economic arguments simply don't hold the same weight in this arena.

One can also argue that the Internet provides very significant alternative outlets for the sharing of information and opinions, and consequently consolidation of other channels is no big deal. Nevertheless, the acceptance and frequent use of the Internet by large segments of our population is not as deep as the corresponding use of TV, radio and print media. Further, the "credible" - by which I mean held to some journalistic standard - sources of information on the 'net are often the very same channels involved in TV, print and radio.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments in opposition to permitting further consolidation of the media.