

We are in a media ownership crisis, and the FCC is part of the problem. The big companies that dominate our media, the lifeblood of democracy, want to grow even bigger and squeeze out all competition and diversity of viewpoints. The last time the FCC tried to relax ownership rules, three million Americans spoke out in opposition.

I'm speaking out again to insist that you establish ownership rules that preserve and enhance diversity of media ownership and available viewpoints. Instead of allowing large media corporations to gobble up even more outlets in order to promote their agenda of increased consumption, I believe that the FCC should encourage the creation of more local, community controlled media outlets. Businesses, schools, local governments, and local religious institutions will all benefit from your action to sustain diverse ownership.

Specifically, I advocate preserving the following rules: the Television-Radio Cross-Ownership Rule, the Broadcast-Newspaper Cross Ownership Ban, the National Television Ownership Rule, the Duopoly Rule for Radio, the Local Television Ownership Rule, and the Dual Network Rule.

I also encourage the FCC to investigate new ways to encourage more diversity in ownership and more local, community controlled media outlets. Your first step should be to release the local news study that was reportedly destroyed. The FCC also needs to conduct a thorough investigation of how the local news study was suppressed and who was responsible, and release the results of that investigation to the public immediately upon its completion.

I urge you to rule in the public interest on this matter. 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.

