

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.

THE FCC IS A BRANCH OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, AND AS SUCH SHOULD BE CONCERNED WITH THE COMMON WELFARE OF THE CITIZENS AS DEFINED BY THE U.S. CONSTITUTION.

CORPORATIONS ARE NOT CITIZENS, AND THE MANAGERS AND BOARDS OF DIRECTORS OF CORPORATIONS HAVE A FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SHAREHOLDERS TO MAXIMIZE PROFIT.

THESE GOALS AND DUTIES DO NOT HAVE TO BE OPPOSITE, BUT IF THERE IS A CONFLICT, CORPORATIONS CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO DEFEND AND PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF CITIZENS OVER THE REVENUE NEEDS OF THE CORPORATION.

IT IS THE DUTY OF THE FCC TO PROTECT AND REGULATE THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, BY INSURING A FREE AND OPEN MARKET FOR THE EXPRESSION OF IDEAS, NOT TO CREATE FREE ACCESS TO MARKET SHARE FOR A FEW MEDIA CORPORATE MONOPOLIES. A MONOPOLY IS THE MOST PROFITABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR A CORPORATION, AN OPEN

MARKET IS THE MOST BENEFICIAL FOR CITIZEN/CONSUMERS IN A DEMOCRACY.

NOT ONLY SHOULD OWNERSHIP RULES NOT BE EXPANDED, BUT HISTORIC LIMITS ON OWNERSHIP SHOULD BE REPLACED.

SINCERELY,
MIKE JANECEK