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**Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.
Testimony
FCC Hearing, Media Ownership
Sunoco Performance Theater
Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts
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Hello, my name is Kimberly Marcus and I am the Director of Media and Telecommunications for the Rainbow PUSH Coalition. Today I will be reading comments on behalf of Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., Founder and President of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

Today I hope we will be heard and not just tolerated. At the heart of my remarks, there is a gap between who owns the airways-the people or those who bought or sold the airways.

Ownership and publishers choose editors and writers; they choose priorities and ultimately it bleeds into content.

Urban America is under assault today. The current Administration has cut Section 8 housing; cut school budgets; cut content of art and music out of schools; cut jobs, and cut hospitals. The government persuades telecommunication companies into giving private telephone numbers to the government and cutting media access. Combined, this is protracted genocide on civil rights.

The issue of media ownership can be considered a "three-legged stool", compromised of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Congress, and the public, with each "leg" providing critical support. The FCC sets the rules with comment from the public; and Congress enforces the rules.

As the FCC considers sweeping changes to the nation's media ownership rules, a recent report by Free Press analyzes female and minority ownership of full-power commercial broadcast television stations.

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The current state of the broadcast industry does not represent our country's diversity.

1. Women comprise half of the U.S. population, but own less than 5% of the broadcast TV stations.
2. Minorities comprise a third of the U.S. population, but own approximately 3% of the broadcast TV stations.
3. The level of minority ownership in the general economy rose over the past decade, but declined in broadcast TV.

Non-minority stations do not cover a diverse range of issues and perspectives.

1. Concentration among a few similar corporations with common interests reduces the range of perspectives and life experiences reflected in the media.
2. Non-minority stations cater to the mostly white, upper class, suburban groups that their advertisers want to target.
3. Issues that are important to people of color, the working class and rural citizens are excluded or ignored.

While people of color and women ownership have increased in other industries, the percentage in the broadcast industry has worsened.

In short, too few, own too much, at the expense of too many.

The issue gets worse by poor public policy decisions which instead of encouraging inclusion of women and people of color, actually have locked more of the "Rainbow" out of opportunities. Thus there has been no improvement in the level of minority broadcast television ownership since 1998, even as the total number of stations has increased. There has been a marked decrease of African American-owned stations-dropping nearly 30% since 1998. A bulk of minority-owned station sales after 1998 would not have been permitted under pre-1996 nationwide ownership rules which prevented the few from owning many stations. The FCC policies of the past 10 years have resulted in 40% loss of people of color-owned stations.

I have urged the new Congressional leadership to focus on restoring the tax certificate in telecommunication. It is important to have diverse ownership of broadcast radio and television stations.

The return of a tax certificate program would give minority bidders a legal opportunity in their bids to overcome financing shortage that today have left us with a very low number of minority owners.

Media ownership should look like America!

We lose our ability to make an informed and thorough decision if we do not have the right to see, or hear, or read information on a time sensitive basis. We must democratize informational access to capital and health care and education, or the vote and freedom is an illusion.

Democracy without media access and free speech is the “hole of the media donut”. The nation and the world are diverse. To sell it or limit access to information is un-American and un-Godly. As the loop of ownership tightens, we see each other and the world through a key hole rather than through a door. We must open the windows of content, local and shared ownership wide, and let the sun shine in.

Media Ownership in Harrisburg Does Not Reflect the Diversity of its Population

Racial and ethnic minorities comprise over 10 percent of the population in the Harrisburg television market, nearly 14 percent of population in the Harrisburg radio market, and nearly 70 percent of the population in the city of Harrisburg.

Despite the level of racial and ethnic diversity in the Harrisburg area, there are no minority-owned radio or TV stations serving the citizens in this part of Pennsylvania.

Media ownership in America today is driven by greed and not by need.

Thank you.

The Rainbow PUSH Coalition is a progressive organization, which seeks to protect, defend and gain civil rights, even the economic and educational playing fields in all aspects of American life and bring peace to the world. The organization is headquartered at 930 E. 50th St. in Chicago. For more information about the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, please visit the organization’s website, www.rainbowpush.org, or telephone (202) 393-7874. To interview Rev. Jackson on this topic, please call the numbers listed above.