

I believe the FCC has failed to bring about more minority perspectives in mainstream media. The Don Imus controversy shows how badly we need more diverse, independent and local media owners. We also need Public Broadcasting in this country as well, to represent more closely the voice of the people. European media promote diversity and intelligent discussion, and help people make up their minds based on fair consideration of the issues. But the FCC's policies are promoting exactly the opposite outcome.

A recent report by the media reform organization Free Press found that while minorities make up 33 percent of the U.S. population, only 3.26 percent of all broadcast TV stations are owned by minorities. The report also finds that the percentage of minority-owned stations has dropped since 1998.

Diversity is the cornerstone of a democratic media system; we cannot afford to lose it in any way. It would be unconscionable for the FCC to let large media owners buy up more local media outlets before redressing the agency's failure to foster minority voices in the media.

Allowing further concentration of local media markets will only worsen the problems we already have and will do nothing to resolve the situation. The FCC should not allow relaxation or elimination of limits on media ownership without first hearing widespread public concern about the problems of minority representation and lack of minority broadcast station owners. Right now the so-called "liberal media" is neither: power is concentrated at the top in the hands of a few, and diversity is the last thing these owners want. They are all about profit and entertainment and care little or nothing about honesty, integrity, respect and the very freedom of speech upon which our democracy is supposedly founded.

Democracy cannot flourish without diversity, and without respect for freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Our democracy requires the free flow of local information from diverse voices. We encourage as strongly as possible that the FCC stand firm with the public against further concentration of media ownership in the hands of the few, and to require responsible use of public airwaves for the public good.