

I am 80 years old and I remember my father telling me to consider all points of view before making up my mind about issues. How is this going to be possible if the ownership of media is concentrated in so few hands. As it is now, already i have to go to foreign news websites to find out what is going on in my own country. As it is I have cancelled my cable news services for the lack of critical information that is available on them. The concentration of news in corporate ownership is a highly undemocratic policy. I fear for the future of our country for not having an educated public.

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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.