

Michael Lutter

Sirs:

One of the safeguards of democracy written into our Constitution is our First Amendment, directing that Congress shall make no law abridging freedom of speech or of the press. Those freedoms were wisely chosen for Constitutional protection, because they are critical to the survival of our nation. Unless Americans are informed and aware of the actions of their government, they can not vote in an informed and intelligent way. The legitimacy of a democracy depends on "the consent of the governed" as expressed by votes cast in free and fair elections. When there is no freedom of speech or of the press, when information is controlled and censored, elections become meaningless and democracy dies.

Over the past decade, the FCC has failed in its responsibility to protect these freedoms by allowing public resources to be sold to private interests, so that fewer and fewer individuals control the content of our airwaves. We have seen the tragic effects of public policy that is not formed in vigorous public debate, and we will suffer these ill effects for years to come. At this point, the Internet is one arena where freedom of speech still exists, and it is growing in importance as part of our political process. It is exactly the kind of safeguard of democracy that our Founding Fathers had in mind.

It must not be sold out, so that once again freedom of speech is only available to the highest bidder.

Our freedoms are beyond price.

And We the People of the United States, we who are the source of all government powers, derived from our consent and support, We the People will be paying close attention to the actions of the FCC and to its commitment to acting in the public interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Lutter