

I am writing today to express my disgust and outrage at FCC Chairman Martin's utter disregard for democratic principles and process. Over the past three years the FCC has become part of the rancorous political partisan ideological battle between left and right instead of simply doing what it was created for which is to manage the communication infrastructure in this country WITH THE PUBLIC INTEREST as the primary guiding principle.

What part of NO do the conservative members of the FCC not understand? The Public has already commented on the proposed media consolidation policy changes ad nauseum and came back with a resounding NO! NO WE DON NOT THINK it is in our best interest for these or any variation of them to be made policy. Somehow Chairman Martin and company think it's okay to do an end run around the public and democratic process because they didn't get the answer they hoped for the FIRST THREE TIMES THEY ASKED! They have already had many bites at this apple, the process has been engaged and run it's course and it should have been accepted the first three times the Public and Congresses gave the answer NO. To pursue policies that are against the public interest and will is not only arrogant but an abuse of power and highly unethical. Somehow Chairman Martin and company think that they know better than the collective wisdom of the thousands who have commented who are backed by millions who fee

I the same way but did not take the time to comment. This is the height of hubris.

Just to be clear I'm not angry because they have a different viewpoint than mine. In fact I voted for Ronald Reagan and Bush Senior for president so this isn't politically motivated. I'm angry because they are willfully ignoring democratic processes and the will of the people. Nobody is above the law. Chairman Martin has been deceptive and disingenuous by subverting the process and rushing these changes through in spite of Public outcry and Congressional requests to at least delay making the decision.

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. More consolidation will get us more of what I saw on the

local evening news a few months back which was a news piece on the new banana flavored Twinkie. I'm not kidding! Apparently the local news affiliate which is really controlled and owned by an out of town company decided I needed to know about this new Twinkie. This is the kind of irrelevant corporate driven media pabulum you get with more media consolidation.

I watched Chairman Martin's testimony before congress and I have to say I was not impressed. I have no confidence he has any working knowledge of the current media landscape. He lacked a basic command of the facts and seems stuck to a flawed ideological dogma of doing the bidding of big business. His arguments that newspapers need to consolidate with other media because they are a failing enterprise is false as members of congress, during that same inquiry, already pointed out many owners of newspapers have stated time and again that newspapers are indeed profitable as ever.

By his own admissions Chairman Martin said he had his mind already made up to implement these disastrous policies even before Public comment on them was complete and this is why he doesn't deserve to be trusted with something as important as making Policy for Mass Media. Martin and anyone else left or right who cannot abide by ethical rules of fair play should be shown the door. Keeping media free and independent is in everyone's best interest.

Michael Lubrano  
Seattle, Washington