

1 the nation's population, Hispanics are
2 woefully under-represented on the networks'
3 prime time broadcast schedules.

4 Of course, bilingual Hispanics can always
5 tune in to Spanish-language programming on
6 Telemundo or Univision; however, there exists
7 precious little in the way of English-language
8 options for programming that depicts American
9 life in America today.

10 This lack of Hispanic programming harms
11 not only Latinos but non-Latinos as well and
12 does incalculable damage to our overall
13 national cultural dialogue, by essentially
14 ignoring a vibrant flourishing sector of
15 America's population.

16 In past years, break-through programming,
17 like All in the Family, Chico and the Man,
18 Good Times, The Jeffersons and The Cosby Show,
19 introduced African-Americans, Latinos and all
20 of Americans -- Americans -- to some of the
21 most well-loved and unforgettable characters
22 in the history of television.

23 These shows not only made us laugh and
24 cry, they also helped to open up a dialogue of
25 understanding and empathy between different

244

1 segments of America's society. Importantly,
2 these shows were all independently produced.
3 They were not produced by the networks that
4 aired them.

5 In today's era of unparalleled vertical
6 integration, these groundbreaking shows would
7 likely never see the light of the day. How
8 many similar shows are not being broadcast
9 because the networks are not willing to
10 develop or air them?

11 Against this backdrop, Screen Actors
12 Guild as the representative for thousands of
13 Latino performers, urges you to help secure a
14 marketplace wherein programming exists that is
15 more relevant to and more reflective of our
16 lives.

17 Specifically, I appear before you today
18 to ask that the FCC adopt the proposal to set
19 a new standard that a minimum 25 percent of
20 the networks' prime-time schedules be filled
21 with programming made and owned by independent
22 producers. (Applause.)

23 These recommendations have been
24 previously submitted to the Commission by the
25 Coalition for Program Diversity, of which

245

1 Screen Actors Guild is a member of.

2 As we can see by the programming
3 currently available on our airwaves, the days
4 of an independent producer making his or her
5 creative vision a TV production is a thing of
6 the past.

7 A decade ago, 67 percent of prime-time
8 television programs -- programming -- aired by
9 the four networks was produced by independent
10 producers. Today, only 25 percent of the

11 broadcast networks' prime-time programming is
12 obtained from independent producers; and most
13 of that content is reality-based programming.

14 Big media companies create almost every
15 show and cast almost every actor, because they
16 can. They own most of the product. They make
17 decisions based on their own cultural
18 experiences and expectations of revenue, not
19 always on the needs of the community,
20 specifically, underserved and
21 under-represented community.

22 Unfortunately, there exists no
23 independent program sources to counterbalance
24 a networks' power. So what is wrong with the
25 four networks producing and owning the vast

246

1 majority of the prime-time, over-the-air
2 programming?

3 After the financial syndication rules
4 were allowed to lapse in 1993, the networks
5 said that they would not favor in-house
6 developed and produced product in their
7 programming choices.

8 But, of course, that is exactly what has
9 happened. The FCC study titled "Program
10 Diversity and the Program Selection Process on
11 Broadcast Netcast Television" --

12 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 Mr. Rosenwasser.

15 MR. ROSENWASSER: Good evening and,

16 Commissioners, welcome to Tampa Bay.

17 My name is Sam Rosenwasser, and I'm the
18 president and general manager of WTSP Channel
19 10, WTSP-HD on Channel 24, 10 Weather Now on
20 Channel 24.2, tampabays10.com, Studio 10.TV,
21 10weathernow.com and two more websites coming
22 in the next 30 days.

23 We offer local consumers many different
24 places to go to for local news, information
25 and entertainment. Choice. Consumers have

247

1 more choices for news and information than
2 ever before.

3 We recognize that in our on-demand
4 society, people want their news and
5 entertainment on their time table, not ours.
6 So we've expanded on to new platforms that
7 enable us to be a 24-7 resource for them
8 providing many different resources and
9 services to our local consumers.

10 I sit before tonight, as a broadcaster,
11 very proud of the local product we produce
12 every day. With each weekday we provide four
13 and a half hours of live local news and
14 information. In addition, we produce a local
15 hour-long program each weekday that gives
16 local nonprofit agencies a forum to talk about
17 what they're doing to benefit the public.

18 I also sit before you tonight as a
19 broadcaster who, in view of the massive
20 explosion of information sources available to
21 consumers, is very concerned about local

22 broadcasters' future.

23 The media landscape has changed
24 dramatically since 1975, when the newspaper
25 broadcast crossed-ownership rules were put in

248

1 place. I won't argue about whether these
2 actions in 1975 were warranted. But I can
3 tell you that in 1975 no one in Tampa Bay was
4 watching CNN, the weather Channel, logging on
5 to the Internet or watching 24-7 local cable
6 news channels. They couldn't. Because they
7 different exist.

8 Competition in today's media environment
9 is intense. And I don't see that changing.
10 Every day in Tampa Bay, we compete with 12
11 full-time television stations, dozens of radio
12 stations, 11 daily newspapers in our DMA, two
13 full-time cable local news channels and
14 millions of websites. That's right,
15 "Millions."

16 In fact, if you type in "Tampa Bay" in
17 Google you will find almost 20 million search
18 results. Even my network partner, CBS, has
19 announced they'll utilize other websites to
20 run their prime-time programming before they
21 air on my station. All this means is that the
22 pie is getting split up into smaller and
23 smaller pieces.

24 Today, the lines that used to define
25 television, newspaper and radio are blurring

249

1 very quickly. Television reporters are
2 writing for websites and producing expanded
3 versions of stories seen on their newscasts.
4 Newspaper reporters are shooting and editing
5 video for their websites. And radio station
6 websites offer news and information as well.

7 Each day I compete with Media General,
8 which owns WFLA-TV, the Tampa Tribune and
9 TBO.com. Has this newspaper-TV combination
10 kept us from competing successfully in this
11 market? Absolutely not.

12 In the most recent rating period, we held
13 the number one position in adults 25-54, women
14 25-54 and women 18-49 for the 11 o'clock news
15 time period. But I can appreciate the
16 opportunity that Media General has to provide
17 local viewers and readers extended coverage
18 from different angles.

19 In addition, common ownership works
20 extremely well in Phoenix, Arizona, where my
21 company, Gannett, operates KPNX and owns the
22 Arizona Republic. That joint ownership
23 creates enhanced products for the local
24 consumer, and the citizens of Phoenix benefit
25 from that fact.

250

1 At the same time the editorial
2 independence of each of these properties is
3 maintained. And this has been documented in
4 comments filed with the Commission. The
5 concern that two commonly-owned properties
6 would present the exact same position just

7 isn't realistic and goes against journalistic
8 ethics and sound business judgment.

9 Newspapers and Television are so
10 different. For one thing, newspapers have the
11 luxury of space. I once heard that if you
12 took every word spoken in an average
13 television newscast, it wouldn't fill one
14 column in a newspaper. On the other hand,
15 television is a media. And websites have the
16 ability to combine the best of newspapers and
17 television.

18 Local news and information products
19 represent significant investments to a local
20 community. For broadcasters to continue to
21 successfully operate in today's highly
22 competitive media environment, we must look
23 for opportunities to maximize our efforts to
24 attract viewers and web users.

25 As is true in Phoenix and here in Tampa
251

1 Bay, permitting joint ownership of television
2 operations and a newspaper --

3 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

4 MR. ROSENWASSER: -- will make it
5 possible to better serve local consumers with
6 more local information. Thank you.

7 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you, Mr. Rosenwasser.
8 Dr. Glenn Cherry.

9 DR. CHERRY: Good evening Commissioners.
10 My name is Dr. Glenn W. Cherry, and I'm
11 president and CEO of Tama Broadcasting, Inc.

12 For 19 years my family has owned radio
13 stations in the state of Florida. We are the
14 largest African-American radio broadcaster in
15 the state. In many ways my story's similar to
16 that of other African-American owners and
17 former owners.

18 Most African-American broadcasters got
19 into station ownership to serve their local
20 community. They wanted to provide a distinct,
21 compassionate and caring voice and to help
22 solve community problems and provide the type
23 of positive programming that our community
24 could be proud of.

252

25 Upon entering the radio business, most

1 African-American broadcasters serving
2 predominantly African-American audiences soon
3 learned that some advertisers would not
4 advertise on our stations at all and that
5 others would vastly discounted the value of
6 African-American consumers. We call that the
7 "Black Tax."

8 And at any time after we moved into an
9 ownership position to look at the "Black Tax,"
10 we paid higher cost for our stations, the cost
11 of capital was higher for us, and the return
12 on our investment from what services that we
13 rendered were less than the general market.

14 The 1996 Telecommunication Act allowed
15 unprecedented consolidation in the industry,
16 changing the ownership landscape to the
17 detriment of minority and small broadcasters

18 and new entrants.

19 After many discussions with other
20 broadcasters, my family decided that we would
21 have to grow or sell our three AM stations at
22 the time. And so we tried to find capital
23 investment in the state of Florida.

24 Unable to attract capital, we moved to
25 New York, where we found a black-venture

253

1 capital firm and a lender who no longer lends
2 on such small deals (sic), and we purchased
3 eight FM stations between 2001 and 2004.

4 Unfortunately, since this was after 9/11,
5 the terrorists attacked, and the maturing
6 consolidation of the broadcast industry and
7 the economic instability of the post 9/11
8 environment made it extremely difficult for
9 African-American small broadcasters to compete
10 in the marketplace.

11 In a down economy, we struggle to
12 effectively compete against larger companies
13 that were consolidated. It almost took ten
14 years before we got started. They are
15 ruthless in their pursuit of total domination
16 of the advertising revenues in our market and
17 will engage in unethical and illegal
18 anticompetitive behavior if necessary.

19 At the same time, local communities are
20 seeking more public service, especially local
21 nonprofits. As small broadcasters we are
22 closer to the community than larger

23 correspondence and, thus, we see more
24 grassroots initiatives. We are called on to
25 provide a disproportionate amount of local

254

1 public service from the community.

2 Ownership of radio stations by small
3 broadcasters are a labor of love. We are a
4 training ground for many minorities. And we
5 have two women general market managers during
6 a time when the industry has not promoted
7 women in great numbers to upper management.

8 You-all know the ownership numbers of
9 African-Americans in this country is less than
10 2 percent. The Telecommunications Act of 1996
11 directly caused this loss of diversity of
12 ownership. As a result, many small owners
13 found themselves unable to compete and sold
14 their stations to larger competitors instead
15 of risk going out of business.

16 By owning only eleven stations, Tama is
17 one of the largest Black-owned radio groups in
18 the country. This is not an achievement in
19 which the radio industry should be proud. The
20 loss of minority owners robs the American
21 public of the diversity of broadcast voices.

22 The Commission, Congress and the Courts
23 have historically recognized that it's
24 essential to protect the First Amendment
25 rights of all Americans.

255

1 We support the recommendations by the
2 National Association of Black-Owned

3 Broadcasters, which you-all have in your
4 hands, as well as the recommendations of the
5 Minority Media Telecommunications Council.

6 The promotion of the First Amendment
7 rights of listeners and viewers to receive a
8 multiplicity of often conflicting viewpoints
9 from a diversity of sources is the
10 Commission's principal obligation in its
11 regulation of the public airwaves; and to this
12 end it must promote these interests and give
13 paramount consideration to that balance.

14 Because of the serious
15 under-representation of minorities and the
16 ownership of broadcast stations and increasing
17 minority population numbers, the Commission
18 can best promote its First Amendment
19 obligation by making promotion for minority
20 ownerships of broadcast facilities its primary
21 objective in the media-ownership proceedings.

22 I have personally experienced many
23 opportunities where Commission rules and
24 regulations have been manipulated by large
25 broadcasters to keep us from improving our

256

1 signals in the marketplaces. And there should
2 be some attention paid to that and what
3 abilities that the Commission has to enact
4 restraints on these large corporations when it
5 comes to their technical abilities. Thank
6 you. (Applause.)

7 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you, Mr. Cherry.

8 And, audience, will you please join me in
9 thanking all of our panelists this evening for
10 their participation. Thank you very much.

11 All right. Now, as we can transition to
12 the second and final public-comment period. I
13 need to first recognize the following
14 individuals who asked to speak for two
15 minutes, at this point, this evening.

16 At this time would Dick Greco, former
17 Tampa mayor, please come forward.

18 (No audible response.)

19 MR. SIGALOS: Dick Greco?

20 (No audible response.)

21 MR. SIGALOS: How about Kim Scheeler,
22 Tampa Chamber of Commerce President and CEO.
23 Mr. Scheeler.

24 MR. SCHEELER: Yes. Thank you.

25 Good evening Commissioners. A couple of

257

1 quick points I'd like to make about some of
2 the benefits the community receives from the
3 convergence of Media General companies here.

4 I ran the United Way for six years here
5 before moving over to the Chamber. And I can
6 tell you as a head of a charity, it was a
7 great benefit to have one source that you
8 could go to and receive public service
9 coverage in three different outlets within the
10 community and less time, less money spent
11 trying to get exposure out there for our
12 organization. It was a great benefit for the
13 charities in the community.

14 The other is the shared resources that
 15 these outlets can utilize. From a business
 16 perspective that's -- that means that, for
 17 example, we can have a business reporter from
 18 the Tribune on WFLA providing coverage about
 19 business events and business happenings in the
 20 community that normally wouldn't happen,
 21 because the TV station wouldn't be able to
 22 have that resource available to them.

23 So we see that as a great benefit for the
 24 community. We appreciate that. And we think
 25 that we have better news coverage, more

258

1 effective news coverage and more in-depth news
 2 coverage as a result of that. Thank you.

3 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you, Mr. Scheeler.

4 Okay. It's time to continue with public
 5 comments. Before the break we heard from
 6 approximately 45 people. We're starting with
 7 Number 46.

8 I would like to, again, urge everybody,
 9 if they could just try to make sure they
 10 incorporate those things that they want said
 11 within our two-minute period. It would make
 12 it much quicker for us to get through
 13 everybody without me having to interject.

14 A VOICE: Dick Greco is here.

15 MR. SIGALOS: Dick Greco is here.

16 MR. GRECO: It's taken me this long to
 17 get from the back to the front. I'm not used
 18 to this.

19 Commissioners, thank you very much for
20 taking your time to do this. I was sitting
21 here thinking how wonderful it is to see all
22 the wonderful people passionate about anything
23 (Applause.)

259

24 Regardless of what point of view, I think
25 that the -- as stated tonight that you will

1 take something home with you. I must say that
2 the Tampa newspaper and the channel that we're
3 talking about mostly tonight has been part of
4 my life since I was a little boy.

5 I started watching all the television
6 stations here at their inception when they
7 first started. For the most part, they do a
8 good job. I don't always agree with all their
9 points of view, but that's life in the big
10 city today.

11 But I will say that newspapers and
12 television and radio and all the media has a
13 big, big responsibility today. It's the only
14 way we can make up our minds, many times,
15 about everything that goes on. And just a
16 smattering won't do it. These people here
17 probably read and listen to everything. But
18 others simply don't care.

19 I would love to see all of the media
20 recognize the importance that they play. I've
21 seen some people who hate people in public
22 life.

23 You say, "You know them? You ever met
24 them?"

260

25

"No."

1 It happens today because of maybe some
2 story or -- it seems like many of them are
3 competing with each other and trying to do
4 something that will get people's attention as
5 opposed to -- exactly what's going on.

6 I have no quarrel with any of the papers
7 or any of the television stations. I think,
8 by and large, they do a good job. Many of the
9 stations have kept people for many years
10 that've worked there, they've become part of
11 your family. You listen to them.

12 It's terribly, terribly important today,
13 the media. I've talked to many young
14 reporters and said to them, "what you're
15 saying about me, about others, about people in
16 general is very meaningful, and I hope that
17 you take it very seriously."

18 So I know you people are taking your job
19 very seriously. What you've gathered here
20 tonight, maybe take a little bit or all of it
21 together and come up with really benefit --
22 (Inaudible) -- around the world. Thank you.

23 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

24 Joe Illingworth, Gavin Baker, Rob Lorei,
25 Nancy Greenlees, Joseph Floyd, Richard

261

1 Sparrow, please head to the nearest
2 microphone.

3 Mr. Illingworth.

4 MR. ILLINGWORTH: My name is Joe
5 illingworth. I am a resident of Largo and an
6 executive director of absolutely nothing. But
7 I'd to point out that my speech is not been
8 computer-printed, it's not double-spaced, it
9 was not prepared by a PR department, and it
10 has not been reviewed by six corporate
11 attorneys so that I can present it tonight.

12 (Laughter and Applause.)

13 I am a citizen of the earth, like all of
14 you. I would like to point out that media is
15 not just about free speech and free democracy
16 and fair competition, it's much more important
17 than that, it's much, much bigger than that.

18 Media ownership and diversity is not how
19 our society organizes itself, about how it
20 orders itself; it's about how our society
21 controls itself or is controlled by someone.

22 The same technology that allows
23 consolidation of media also allows us and
24 manufacturers and corporation to produce
25 enormous amounts of stuff very cheaply, 24

262

1 color pens for a buck.

2 The same technology doesn't quite make as
3 many colored plasma TVs as we would like, but
4 it has the capability of covering the earth
5 not with plastic-like products, but CO2 and
6 other global gases that create a greenhouse
7 effect and cause global warming.

8 Right now we have a very hot spot right
9 there in a little country called Iraq. Right

10 now we are starting to have a very diverse and
11 vivid debate in our county about why we are
12 there and what it's all about. That debate's
13 four years too late. (Applause) .

14 It's cost 100,000 lives and hundred of --
15 billions of dollars. The same debate needs to
16 happen about global warming. For 10 or 15
17 years we've been denying -- (Inaudible) --
18 scientists -- the media that they need to
19 reach a mass audience.

20 we need to talk about diversity of media
21 and how it's presented. we need massively --

22 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

23 MR. ILLINGWORTH: -- cooperation and
24 collaboration across the globe to have this
25 happen. (Applause.)

263

1 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you very much.

2 MR. ILLINGWORTH: -- later to give that to
3 the Commissioners (Inaudible.) That's very
4 fragile. The world's in their hands.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

7 Gavin Baker.

8 MR. BAKER: Good evening Commissioners.

9 My name is Gavin Baker. I'm a student at
10 the University of Florida. And I'd like to
11 thank the Commission for organizing this
12 hearing. Clearly, I appreciate this
13 opportunity, because I drove two hours from
14 Gainesville to be here.

15 I urge the Commission not to loosen its
16 media-ownership rules. All you've heard from
17 a number of speakers is on the sad state of
18 the public interest in commercial broadcasting
19 today.

20 Myself, I don't even listen. As a young
21 person who wants to be connected with my local
22 community, there's nothing for me on
23 commercial TV and radio. And so it goes for
24 most of my friends. I find that problematic.

25 Now, if media are just a commodity in the

264

1 market, then it's not troubling if I choose
2 not to buy. But media is so much more. The
3 media play an integral role in the community,
4 in self-expression, communication among
5 neighbors, not just a market, but a
6 marketplace of ideas, a gathering place for
7 exploring our shared identity.

8 The spectrum is not the square footage at
9 the shopping mall. It's a precious natural
10 resource that the public owns. It belongs to
11 us.

12 But if the broadcast spectrum were a
13 national park, the park would be fenced off
14 20-feet high with barbed wire on the top. We
15 own it, but we can't use it. You can look
16 inside, but don't go in. You can consume it,
17 but you can't produce it.

18 That's why myself and much of my
19 generation have -- (Inaudible) -- the
20 broadcast media. But me (sic) and I are not

21 content to be excluded, to be consigned to the
22 new media because the old media has abandoned
23 us. We want it back.

24 The commission can help us by rejecting
25 rules that will mean more of the same -- or,

265

1 really, worse than the same -- and put us on
2 the track to more localism, more diversity and
3 a media that serves more than its market, a
4 media that serves its community. Thank you.

5 MR. SIGALOS: Rob Lorei.

6 MR. LOREI: Good evening Commissioners.
7 Thank you for coming. Great to see you.

8 I'm Rob Lorei, one of the founders of
9 WMNF Radio, the community radio station in
10 Tampa. (Applause.) I just want to give you a
11 quick glimpse of what's happened since we
12 started the radio station.

13 When we started reporting, back in the
14 early 1980s, there were seven or eight radio
15 stations competing with us at that time. Now,
16 reliably, there are only three. Something has
17 happened in that time period to give us less
18 local reporting. And I think it is those
19 media-ownership rules that you've enacted and
20 loosened up.

21 In the time that we -- in the 1980s up to
22 the early 1990s, though, we had plenty --
23 plentiful number of talk stations and radio
24 stations. I've got a friend who works for a
25 commercial radio station in town. He was one

266

1 of the last local commercial radio talk show
2 hosts at the Clear Channel station in town.

3 He was fired recently. The reason was --
4 Clear Channel said -- that it couldn't afford
5 the \$3,500 a year to keep his two-hour-a-week
6 talk shows on the radio. Clear Channel has
7 plenty of money. And right now Clear Channel
8 has replaced most of its local talent with
9 nationally syndicated programs.

10 we're well-served if you're conservative.
11 And we're hardly served if you're a liberal or
12 a person of color. I'm sorry I'm rushing.
13 I'm going through this so fast, the -- there
14 is a -- on any given night on television
15 stations, the big four commercial television
16 stations, we get eight minutes of local news.
17 On any given night, if your watching is down
18 (sic), it is a rehash of crime stories.

19 We rarely get city council meetings,
20 county commission meetings, neighborhood
21 controversies -- (Applause) -- civil
22 rights and peace groups and other activist
23 groups are kept out. (Applause.)

24 For an outsider coming to town watching
25 local television the news, it would be easy to

267

1 conclude that we are living in an area
2 populated by murderers, car thieves and
3 convenience-store robbers, home invaders and
4 pit-bull owners that let their dogs run amok.
5 The media has failed us in this city. Please

6 do something about it. (Applause.)

7 MR. SIGALOS: Nancy Greenlees.

8 MS. GREENLEES: Hello. My name is Nancy
9 Greenlees. I want to speak against media
10 consolidation. I speak simply as a concerned
11 citizen.

12 I'm fortunate to live in Tampa, where I
13 can listen to community radio station WMNF and
14 read the independently-owned St. Petersburg
15 Times. I want to speak on behalf of my
16 family, who don't live in Tampa and couldn't
17 be here tonight.

18 My family lives in a city of just one --
19 just under 100,000 residents. Most of the
20 media is owned by Clear Channel and other
21 large corporations. There is one commercial
22 radio station, however, that is owned and
23 operated by a small local company.

24 My brother is currently serving as a city
25 commissioner. And he knows that an informed,

268

1 engaged citizenry is important to good
2 government and community life. Many of his
3 constituents lack easy access to the Internet
4 or don't have a subscription to the
5 newspapers.

6 The locally-owned station is the only one
7 in town that gives them daily free and
8 convenient access to information about local
9 government and school and police concerns,
10 public safety issues, community events and

11 also gives them an opportunity to call in to
12 the locally-produced public-affairs program
13 every weekday to express their concerns and
14 opinions.

15 We know that a lot of people choose this
16 programming over the nationally-produced talk
17 shows from the other medias in town. Because
18 when my brother attends community meetings or
19 speaks to individual citizens after his
20 occasional visits to the radio station to
21 discuss city council issues on the air, he
22 meets many people who say, "I heard you on the
23 radio."

24 We are concerned that if further
25 consolidation of media ownership is allowed,

269

1 this station will be sold to one of the media
2 giants and will no longer have this vital
3 local programming. Please don't let this
4 happen. Please, at the very least, maintain
5 the current-ownership limits (sic.) Thank
6 you.

7 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 Joseph Floyd.

10 MR. FLOYD: My name is Joseph Floyd, and
11 I'm from Gainesville, Florida.

12 A lot of the large companies in the
13 government that control the information in the
14 general population here is not diversifying
15 our media. I've come down here to ask you,
16 the five board members to represent the

17 people's interests when it comes to allowing
18 companies like CBS Corp., Clear Channel and
19 News Corp., who continue to throw a mask over
20 our communication resources.

21 I don't watch, listen to and read the
22 news to be entertained. I watch, listen to
23 and read the news to learn about what's going
24 on in my community and globally.

270

25 I feel that these companies are trying to

1 dictate what is popular rather than
2 encouraging different points of view. And,
3 most importantly, I'm terrified that the FCC
4 Board, as a whole, has not done more to hold
5 these companies accountable for cheating the
6 system.

7 We all know that fining a company like
8 Clear Channel three-and-a-half million dollars
9 for payola is nearly useless. It's a slap on
10 the wrist to the companies and a slap in the
11 face to artists, musicians, journalists and
12 people around the world.

13 You all, as the FCC, are supposed to be
14 protecting us, the people, from corporate
15 brainwashing and manipulation.

16 I grew up watching television for
17 multiple hours a day. But for the last three
18 to four years I felt as if I was getting less
19 intelligent for every second I've listened to
20 corporate media. (Applause.)

21 Thankfully -- thankfully -- now I get the

22 majority of my information from reading
23 online, which at least for now is a much more
24 diverse place to get information.

271

25 I realize that companies have to

1 advertise to make money to keep their business
2 afloat. But allowing these media companies to
3 subliminally push products to people is simply
4 wrong. We, the people, need information from
5 large varieties of sources so we can draw our
6 own conclusions as to what is going on in our
7 community and around the world.

8 MR. SIGALOS: Thank you.

9 MR. FLOYD: Do your job.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. SIGALOS: Greg Lendwirth, Clay
12 Colson, Lillian Dunlap, Leonard Coolidge,
13 Nathan Gove, Arlene Engelhardt, please go to
14 the nearest microphones.

15 Richard Sparrow.

16 MR. SPARROW: Good evening. Thank you
17 for bringing this FCC hearing to Tampa Bay.
18 My name is Richard Sparrow. I am a member of
19 the American Federation of Musicians and a
20 delegate for the west Central Florida
21 Federation of Labor, a nonprofit organization.

22 We held a Labor Day celebration at the
23 Florida State Fair grounds and invited the
24 public to attend for free. Since the day
25 after Labor Day 2006, with the primary

272

1 election in Florida, we also invited many

2 politicians to come to the event and spend
3 time with the public. And with help from the
4 Music Performers Trust Fund, we were able to
5 provide live music for our event.

6 I volunteered to be on the media
7 committee. And I want to share some of the
8 issues we had with our local commercial media.
9 We sent faxes and E-mails to several local
10 newspapers, radio and television stations
11 detailing our event to news department and
12 asked them to be included in the calendar of
13 events published for the general public.

14 Because of the free nature of this event,
15 we thought it would be easy to get
16 public-service announcements -- announcements
17 from the commercial local media. It turned
18 out that all the air time for Labor Day
19 weekend was being held because -- you're right
20 -- the candidates and the local parties were
21 buying all of it.

22 I can only assume, now, that the stations
23 couldn't pass up an opportunity to make some
24 more money off of our election process.

25 After we discovered that we were being

273

1 shut out for public-service announcements, we
2 found some more money to use to purchase some
3 air time. We inquired of several local
4 commercial radio stations, and they gave us
5 options to buy packages that started in the
6 several-thousand dollar range..