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Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

06-121

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman,

The National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) strongly supports Commissioner John Adelstein's call for the creation of a bipartisan, independent minority ownership task force. As an organization dedicated to promoting fairness in media coverage and expanding entrepreneurship opportunities for journalists of color, we strongly believe that media ownership should reflect the racial and ethnic make up of society.

Before considering new ownership rules, it is imperative that the Commission address the current lack of diversity in broadcast media ownership. According to a recent study by Free Press, African Americans own just 3 percent of all full-power, commercial radio stations. For television, the outlook for diversity in station ownership is even bleaker. African Americans own just 18 stations or 1 percent of all local television stations but amount to approximately 13 percent of the U.S. population.

Since 1998, the number of African American-owned broadcast stations, television and radio, has dropped by approximately 30 percent.

With increasing media consolidation, the number of minority owners will steadily decline. The Commission has a responsibility to maintain its public interest obligations and in order to do so, there must be safeguards to ensure station leadership and programming are as diverse as the communities they represent.

NABJ will continue to monitor the Commission's efforts to promote diversity in media ownership and encourage the FCC to engage NABJ, along with the other UNITY: Journalists of Color partners, in the establishment of a minority ownership task force.

Sincerely,

Barbara Ciara
President
National Association of Black Journalists

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