

## FCC Comments: Minority and Women Media Ownership & Elimination of Restrictions on Major Media Cross-Ownership

### 1) Introduction: Filipino Americans are Invisible

Historically, the Filipino American community, which numbers four million in the United States, has been silent on media ownership issues and rarely submits its opinions or concerns to the FCC.

This silence is not due to a lack of concern, but rather a lack of Filipino American lobbyists and experienced lawyers capable of combating the lobbying and legal efforts of thousands of lobbyists and lawyers retained by Big Media to ensure that minority media ownership remains low and unable to grow.

There is imprecise data on Filipino American media ownership. But we do know that:

- African Americans who constitute 13% of the population own only eight TV stations or 0.6 % of all stations. This, however, overstates ownership since these stations are generally quite small with limited facilities to influence the diverse African American community, much less the entire U.S. population;
- Asian Americans comprise almost 5% of the U.S. population (15 million) including four million Filipino Americans, but own only thirteen stations or just less than 1% of all stations; and,
- to the best of our knowledge, no TV stations are owned by Filipino Americans.

Equally alarming are the following facts:

- No major TV programs attempt to portray the past, present and future contributions of the Filipino American community to the United States in a positive light.
- Far too often, the Filipino American role in America is

trivialized and in some cases, such as ABC's Desperate Housewives incident, disparaged well beyond the boundaries of truth or even credible fiction. (See for example Desperate Housewives' direct and explicit statement that the Philippine educational system is worthless and the products of this system, such as the 60,000 Filipino American nurses and 20,000 Filipino American physicians, are a danger to the U.S. health system.)

· Even the news is filtered generally away from Filipino American contributions to the U.S. economy, including the importance of the Philippine nation, its work ethic, and its educational system that helps to sustain the U.S. economy. This is particularly the case with regards to the unique contributions of Filipino American health workers given the U.S. shortage of doctors and nurses, particularly in rural areas and inner-cities.

In summary, the Filipino American community of four million is ignored by mainstream television, and given little or no attention by the major newspaper media.

The negative impact on the Filipino American community may be great as a result of these exclusions. But the negative impact on American society as a whole is far greater. That is, the American corporate sector, the American educational sector, the American political sector, and the American people as a whole are unable to fully benefit from the infusion of Filipino Americans' educational and entrepreneurial stimuli.

Our comments opposing cross ownership of a major daily newspaper and a television or radio station must be viewed in this context.

The Filipino American community, at least as represented herein by over 40 Filipino American organizations under FALCON (or the Filipino American Leadership Council), is not automatically opposed to greater concentrations of media ownership. We are opposed, however, to concentrations of ownership without social or corporate responsibility requirements, or when it is not in the public interest. One of these public interest requirements must be that the Filipino American community, the Asian community as a whole,

and our nations' 110 million minorities be properly covered and assisted in their endeavors by Big Media. That is, the major media outlets must be infused with a direct public interest requirement. To date, few if any major media actively engage in fulfilling this public interest mission and, on behalf of four million Filipino Americans, we are prepared to prove that there is no major media that fairly and comprehensively covers the Filipino American community's contributions to our country's growth and prosperity. In fact, and with the rarest of exceptions, few if any Filipino Americans play a major role in ownership, management or reporting within Big Media.

It is our hope and expectation that after an examination of the Filipino American comments filed herein, that this Commission will require Big Media to respond by itemizing specifically their employment of, and ownership by, Filipino Americans as well as their favorable and/or accurate coverage of Filipino American contributions. To facilitate this, we urge that as a first step the media describe in detail their coverage over the last five years of the contribution of the 60,000 Filipino American nurses and 20,000 Filipino American physicians in helping to alleviate the healthcare crisis in America.

## 2) Involvement and Expertise of FALCON and Mabuhay Alliance

In order to help the FCC better understand FALCON's perspective, we share below a brief background of our organization's involvement and expertise.

The Filipino American Leadership Council, with the acronym FALCON, is a coalition of major Filipino American professionals, humanitarians, businesses, and socio-civic organizations in the United States that work to safeguard, protect, and defend the constitutional rights, honor, image, integrity and general welfare and interests of Filipino Americans in the United States.

Although FALCON was only recently formed in November of 2007, many of its member organizations have been quite involved in various efforts to empower not just the Filipino American community, but other minority communities as well.

A case in point is FALCON's member organization, Mabuhay Alliance, which has played a lead role in raising issues of employment, management and board of director diversity with Federal banking regulators, and with the CEO's of major financial institutions such as Bank of America, Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase, Washington Mutual, Wachovia, Wells Fargo and Merrill Lynch. It has played a similar role with the California Public Utilities Commission in regards to AT&T, Verizon, PG&E, Sempra and Edison in rate proceedings and mergers.

Mabuhay Alliance has also played a lead role with regards to supplier diversity, or business contracts to small minority-owned businesses. Quite recently, Mabuhay Alliance met with the editorial staff of the L.A. Times to discuss diversity issues. It is presently working with the office of the Controller of the Currency, the FDIC, OTS and 14 major banks to double supplier diversity contracts to minority-owned businesses. Furthermore, it is serving as a key coordinator and host for a major supplier diversity conference for minorities which will be held on June 19th in Los Angeles. Over 14 major financial institutions are sponsoring this conference, entitled "Let's Do Business," and one thousand minority and women business owners have already committed to attending the event.

Mabuhay Alliance has played an important role in encouraging both investments in minority communities and philanthropy directed at empowering minority communities. For example, it played a key role in the agreement by East West Bank to commit 13 billion dollars to inner-city community development. It played a similar role in opposing mergers of AT&T and Verizon until they committed to a sixty million dollar investment in broadband to underserved communities. Moreover, in the Sempra rate proceeding, it opposed the merger until Sempra committed to an expanded role for minority-owned businesses and philanthropy to underserved communities. Mabuhay is part of a negotiating team that works for minority empowerment, as well as investments and contracts directed towards minority communities. Mabuhay, along with the rest of the negotiating team, meets annually or semi-annually with the senior

management and CEO's of 15 Fortune 500 corporations. It is also part of the leadership team that semi-annually meets with the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, the Controller of the Currency, the Chair of the FDIC and the director of OTS in Washington, D.C. on key minority empowerment issues including investments, philanthropy, supplier diversity and management.

FALCON and Mabuhay Alliance are new to the FCC but are planning, depending upon the direction of the FCC, to play an increasing role.