

During the Sep. 20 FCC media ownership hearing in Chicago, Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein called for the creation of an independent Minority Ownership Task Force to examine and recommend proposals to increase the number of minority broadcast owners.

We support the creation of such a long-overdue task force. The state of minority ownership in the United States is in crisis. The FCC can no longer wait to take proactive steps when the future of minority ownership is in jeopardy because of media consolidation. We believe the FCC must first resolve the crisis in minority ownership before it can move forward with any plans to adopt new ownership rules.

The FCC has a shameful history when it comes to adopting regulations to increase minority ownership, examining the impact of media consolidation on communities of color or addressing how the historic legacy of discrimination has prevented people of color from becoming broadcast owners.

Even though people of color make up 35 percent of the U.S. population, they own just 3 percent of all local TV stations and 8 percent of all local radio stations, according to recent studies by Free Press. These studies also found the more concentrated a broadcast market, the less likely you will find a minority owner.

Creating a task force to address the issue of minority ownership is hardly unprecedented. The FCC created a task force 30 years ago that recommended policies that led to the first significant increase in minority ownership ever in our nation's history.

We call on the FCC not to move forward with adopting any rule changes until it first addresses the issue of minority ownership. Creating a task force would be a significant first step.