

I write you today, to voice my concern regarding the proposed Comcast-NBC merger. The consequences of unchecked media consolidation are clear. As big media get bigger, we end up with fewer jobs in our newsrooms, more sensationalism and celebrity gossip instead of real news, and media that are out of touch with what our communities need.

My personal experience with Comcast took place while visiting Paducah KY in 2007, for a reunion. While at our hotel I turned the channel to MSNBC, as they had directed. It was listed near CNN and FOX. To my surprise, Fox and CNN were there, but NO MSNBC. On inquiry, I was told by a Comcast representative that MSNBC had been changed to a higher cost premium channel. So, my conclusion... If you live in Paducah KY and want to see news programming with a slightly progressive tone, then you will have to pay a premium price. And, if you're in a hotel, you're just may be out of luck. Was Comcast guilty of controlling the message? I can't say, but it left me a touch suspicious...

Thus Comcast's proposed takeover of NBC-Universal and its broadcast stations leaves me particularly troubled. The largest cable and Internet access provider could also control one of the nation's largest movie and TV studios. This is too much power for one company, and it's a threat to competition and innovation at a moment when new forms of online video delivery are emerging. Haven't we seen the results of too big...in our financial industry?

Comcast has a long history of promising one thing, and doing another. We can't simply hand over our valuable public airwaves to another Big Media giant. I am deeply concerned about how Comcast's ownership of NBC will impact NBC and Telemundo owned and operated stations and impact NBC affiliates around the country. Comcast has promised to take a hands off approach, but Comcast has also proven they can't be trusted.

This merger will have a direct negative impact on competition, innovation and consumer choice and would likely usher in a new wave of media giants as other companies scramble to match Comcast-NBC's market power.

This takeover will do nothing good for our communities, our state or our democracy. Please, the FCC must protect our public airwaves and stand up against this merger.

My thanks for your time and attention to this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Deidre Austin