

December 15, 2012

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Media Ownership

Dear FCC Commissioners:

I understand the FCC is again contemplating rule changes allowing greater concentration of media ownership, in a “behind closed doors” fashion without the benefit of any public hearings. The topic of media ownership is important to Americans, and any proposed changes merit an open process with broad public involvement and public hearings.

I strongly oppose any relaxation or elimination of the public interest limits on media ownership. Media ownership is already far too consolidated. Diversity and localism are the cornerstones of a democratic media system, and a free flow of information is a cornerstone of democracy itself. Regulations that promote diversity - i.e. limits on media consolidation - have been a bulwark against the concentration of economic power in the marketplace of ideas -- a critical part of balancing the public service mission of the media with their private profit motive. Our democracy requires the free flow of information from a broad range of diverse voices. If we value our democracy, we cannot afford to compromise a democratic media system in any way.

The FCC's own studies have shown that local ownership leads to more coverage of local news. An un-informed or mis-informed public is not able to participate fully in democracy. I never hear about this type of FCC regulation or rule-making from the major media outlets. Do you? I only hear about it on a radio station and a TV station that are both locally controlled.

Media consolidation has already led to declines in local and minority ownership as well as the homogenization of content in radio and television. Permitting cross-ownership of newspapers and broadcast stations, or allowing further concentration in local television markets, will only worsen the problems we already have.

The internet is not a substitute for TV or radio. People have TV or radio on while dressing for work, eating meals at home, or doing chores, and people typically listen to radio while commuting to work - they are not reading news on the internet while performing these daily activities. While the internet is a tremendous force, it is not a substitute, and does not make consolidation of other media acceptable.

When the FCC attempted to weaken and remove media ownership limits in 2003 and 2006, I along with millions of other Americans rose up in protest. Please stand firm with the American people against further concentration of media ownership in the hands of the few. I strongly urge you to vote against media consolidation and in support of a healthy democracy.

Sincerely,

Mary Linton