The FCC has under the Obama Administration failed to protect the public interest when it comes to stopping media consolidation and protecting competition in the broadband market to ensure quality service, affordable pricing (cost) for our communications networks. Over 70 years ago America faced similar challenges with harnessing a communication technology's democratic potential, and a public interest defender rose to the occasion. In the late 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt watched as newspaper companies rapidly bought up broadcast stations. What had been hailed as a great democratizing force -- radio -- was being over-commercialized, degraded by poor programming and excessive advertising. Roosevelt wanted an FCC chair who would stand up to powerful media lobbies and help rescue radio's fading democratic promise. In James Lawrence "Larry" Fly he found someone who not only wouldn't back down, but would relish defending the public interest against media monopolies.

Chairman Fly initiated a century long progressive regulatory orientation for media policy. He viewed monopoly power with a deep seated suspicion believing that capitalism foundered without competition. Beyond being known as a fighter, his life's work would be defined by a commitment to civil liberties and democratic principles. He viewed the American media system as democracy's infrastructure; too precious to leave to profit motives alone. Under his watch the FCC dramatically intervened against media concentration by acting on the report's recommendations to force NBC to divest itself of one of its two networks, which became ABC, and by loosening the networks' control over their affiliates, which promoted localism.

In addition to increasing competition and breaking up media companies, Fly's FCC fought against wiretapping, placed constraints on broadcasters' political editorializing, and pressured the NAB to amend its code, making it easier for marginalized voices like labor activists to get on the air.