



June 10, 2014

Chairman Greg Walden  
Subcommittee on Communications and  
Technology  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2182 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Anna Eshoo  
Subcommittee on Communications and  
Technology  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
215 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Re.: Media Ownership in the 21st Century Hearing

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Eshoo:

On behalf Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC (Advancing Justice | AAJC) we write to express the importance of a regulatory framework to preserve and promote a diverse media landscape.

Advancing Justice | AAJC is dedicated to promoting a fair and equitable society for all by working for civil and human rights and empowering Asian Americans and other underserved communities. We provide the Asian American community education on important issues that affect our communities and public policy and civil rights advocacy. In the communications field, Advancing Justice | AAJC works to promote universal access and adoption and reduce barriers to critical technology, services, and the media.

Broadcast media remains a special and important source of information for communities of color, which make up 41% of broadcast-only homes.<sup>1</sup> Broadcast is only available because of the government grant of licenses to use increasingly scarce public airwaves. Thus despite arguments that the Internet and other technologies have changed the way communities consume information, it is incumbent on the government to ensure that the use of public resources is in the public interest, including promoting a diversity of voices, competition, and localism.

Ensuring a diverse media landscape is especially important for Asian Americans to access information that is culturally and linguistically relevant—including lifesaving emergency information—because approximately one-third of Asian Americans are limited-English proficient (LEP).<sup>2</sup> For example, Vietnamese, Bangladeshi, Cambodian, Hmong, Taiwanese, Chinese, Korean, and Laotian communities all have LEP rates over 40%.<sup>3</sup> One of five Asian American households also live in linguistically isolated households, meaning all household

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<sup>1</sup> Press Release, Nat'l Ass'n of Broadcasters, Over-the-Air Renaissance Continues as Pay TV Cord-Cutting Rises (June 21, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Asian Pacific American Legal Ctr. & Asian American Justice Ctr., *A Community of Contrasts: Asian Americans in the United States 2011* 27 (2011). In 2007-2009 approximately 13% of Hmong, 7% of Cambodian, and 6% of Laotian American households accessed cash public assistance, compared to 5% of African American and 4% of Latino households.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 28.

members 14 years old and up speak English less than “very well.”<sup>4</sup> In addition, Asian Americans are too often treated as the invisible minority whose stories are overlooked by mainstream media.

Despite the fact that one in four Asian Americans relies solely on over the air broadcasting<sup>5</sup>, racial minorities owned only 30 full power television stations (2.2%) and Asians owned only six stations (0.5%).<sup>6</sup> This is despite Asian Americans making up approximately six percent of the U.S. population, being the fastest growing racial group, and having a higher average household income than other racial groups. Moreover, we have observed that Asian-owned stations or stations carrying Asian-oriented content have been sold to speculators in anticipation of upcoming spectrum incentive auctions. The loss of these outlets will have a direct negative impact on Asian American communities who rely on these stations.

One of the most notable losses will be KSCI, an Asian language station which was acquired by NRJ TV.<sup>7</sup> According to Nielsen, KSCI is the most watched station among Los Angeles Chinese and Koreans regardless of their language preference.<sup>8</sup> In addition to local news broadcasts in Asian languages, the value of KSCI was displayed in October 2008 when it broadcasted the presidential debate with simultaneous Mandarin translation.<sup>9</sup>

We also support the Federal Communications Commission’s efforts to enforce its media ownership rules. We and other civil rights organizations have expressed our concern with agreements between stations that mimic joint ownership and circumvent rules meant to promote a market with a diversity of voices and economic opportunities for communities of color and women.<sup>10</sup> While we acknowledge some of these arrangements may promote diversity, the Commission must have the flexibility to determine which agreements serve the public interest. We also note that our own examination of the six Asian-owned full power TV stations identified by the Commission revealed that none are entered into any such agreements.

Thank you for your consideration on this very important topic. Please do not hesitate to contact Jason T. Lagria, Advancing Justice | AAJC Senior Staff Attorney, at 202-296-2300 ext. 122 if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

/s Jason T. Lagria  
Senior Staff Attorney  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

cc: Federal Communications Commission, 2014 Quadrennial Review FNPRM MB Docket No. 14-50

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 29.

<sup>5</sup> Nat’l Ass’n of Broadcasters, *Broadcast Television and Radio in Asian-American Communities* 1 (2013).

<sup>6</sup> FCC, *Report on Ownership of Commercial Broadcast Stations*, MB Docket Nos. 09-182, 07-294 (2012).

<sup>7</sup> TVNewsCheck.com, *NRJ TV to Acquire Asian-Language KSCI*, <http://www.tvnewscheck.com/article/58343/nrj-tv-to-acquire-asianlanguage-ksci> (Mar. 27, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Nielsen, *Significant, Sophisticated and Savvy: The Asian American Consumer 2013 Report* (2013).

<sup>9</sup> Highbeam.com, *Los Angeles TV Station to Broadcast October 7 Presidential Debate Live in Chinese*, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-187118059.html> (Oct. 16, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Letter to FCC, MB Docket No. 09-182, MB Docket No. 07-294, BO docket No. 12-30 (March 24, 2014).