

October 3, 2006

Chairman Kevin J. Martin  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Michael J. Copps  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Robert M. McDowell  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Chairman Jonathan S. Adelstein  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin and Commissioners:

We, the undersigned civil rights and public interest organizations, urge the Federal Communications Commission to stop further concentration of media ownership until it has taken the necessary steps to promote minority and female ownership of broadcast stations. A regrettable legacy of exclusion in broadcast licensing has left too few owners and too little diversity in our media system. The FCC must study the impact of consolidation on the diversity of media ownership and implement a plan to increase minority and female ownership of broadcast stations. This must be an urgent priority.

“Out of the Picture,” a new study by Free Press, demonstrates the unacceptable lack of diversity in television station ownership. The study finds that women and minorities have been shut out of media ownership. While women comprise 51 percent of the entire U.S. population, women own less than 5 percent of all television stations. Minorities make up 33 percent of the entire U.S. population, yet minorities own less than 3.5 percent of all stations. While the level of female and minority ownership has advanced in other industries since the late 1990s, it has worsened in the broadcast sector.

The Free Press study shows that the more station ownership is concentrated in a market, the less likely it is to have minority and female owners. Recent policies encouraging media concentration have contributed to the loss of diversity in station ownership. Despite the overwhelming evidence of media consolidation's devastating impact on diversity, the FCC is now poised to permit further concentration by relaxing ownership limits. Such changes would directly conflict with the commission's statutory mandate to foster diversity over the public airwaves.

The FCC has a responsibility to monitor and promote the diversity of media owners in order to achieve more diverse media content. We are concerned that further consolidation of media will only aggravate the absence of minority and female owners in the U.S. broadcast system. We urge the FCC to halt its current review of media ownership rules until it has fully studied the impact these changes will have on diversity of ownership. We urge the FCC to immediately implement policies that promote more diverse media in America.

Sincerely,