

U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

December 13, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

As you know, Congress has long entrusted the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) with upholding the core values of competition, localism, and diversity of media. We urge you to remember that Congress recognized that while the media marketplace may change, the role that these values play in advancing public disclosure and strengthening our democracy is constant. Unfortunately, the FCC's most recent review has left us deeply concerned with the direction you are proposing to take to address the changing media landscape.

While the Commission is correct in noting that consumers are increasingly moving online to view news and information, this does not mitigate the Commission's Congressional mandate to protect and promote localism and diversity in our nation's broadcast media. While the Commission has made some strides in expanding broadband availability, actual adoption of the service has slowed over the past several years. In fact, according to a May 2012 Pew study, over the past several years adoption of high-speed Internet has remained around sixty-five percent among American households.¹ Simply put, resting any justification to relax the Commission's media ownership rule on the growth of Internet news ignores the millions of Americans who are not yet online.

More importantly, local television and radio stations are the essential – and sometimes the only – source of local news and information for many communities. As the Commission's own research demonstrates, local TV stations and local newspapers remain the dominant sources of local news, even online through their websites. The Commission's evidence on this question concluded, "the big picture is that there is little evidence in this data that the Internet has expanded the number of local news outlets."² In this regard the Internet is not a growing source of original local news, as much as it is an additional platform for the same incumbent media owners.

The American public deserves to have choice in the medium through which they access news and information – online via their tablets, smartphones and laptops or via their local television and radio stations. Yet, even more crucial is preserving Americans' ability to choose between

¹ *Pew Internet: Broadband*, Pew Internet & American Life Project (May 24, 2012) (online at <http://pewinternet.org/Commentary/2012/May/Pew-Internet-Broadband.aspx>).

² *The Harsh Reality About Local News From The Internet*, Media Access Project (June 16, 2011) (online at: <http://www.mediaaccess.org/2011/06/the-harsh-reality-about-local-news-from-the-internet/>).

different voices, viewpoints and opinions. It is the Commission's job to protect and promote this localism and diversity in our marketplace of ideas.

We urge you to refrain from adopting your proposal until you've had the opportunity to follow the Third Circuit's order to fully assess the impact that further consolidation would have on ownership diversity and localism in our nation's media system.

A true manifestation of a vibrant democracy are many voices to the many...not fewer.

Sincerely,



Anna G. Eshoo
Ranking Member
Communications and Technology Subcommittee
Energy and Commerce Committee



Michael F. Doyle
Member
Energy and Commerce Committee



Edolphus Towns
Member
Energy and Commerce Committee



Donna Christensen
Member
Energy and Commerce Committee



Bobby Rush
Member
Energy and Commerce Committee

cc: Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai