

# The Case Against WWOR

---

**The public owns the airwaves** that radio and TV stations use to broadcast. However, Big Media companies have been permitted to use those airwaves for free - making millions of dollars doing so - under the obligation that they serve local communities.

Before 1982 there were no VHF TV stations located in New Jersey. The FCC denied the renewal of WWOR's license in the early 1980s because its owner, General Tire and Rubber Co., engaged in a range of corporate misconduct. When a court required the FCC to reconsider its decision, WWOR's owner convinced Congress to pass a law in 1982. The law required the FCC to automatically renew WWOR-TV 9's license if the "license holder will move its studios and offices to New Jersey and operate in New Jersey for the benefit of the people in our State. This station will not be a New Jersey station in name only. It will serve the people of New Jersey". However, all indications suggest that **WWOR has not served the people of New Jersey.**

Fox Television Inc., which owns WWOR, has filed an application to renew its license to broadcast, but public interest groups argue that **WWOR has not held up its end of the bargain.** Now the Federal Communications Commission wants to hear from you. **On November 28<sup>th</sup>, at 4pm in the Paul Robeson Campus Center on the Newark Campus of Rutgers University** you have the rare opportunity to make your voice heard about how WWOR is serving New Jersey.

**"The more than 8 million residents of New Jersey deserve access to adequate news coverage from the state's only commercially licensed VHF television station. WWOR has a responsibility to provide meaningful coverage of the issues and events that affect the lives of residents here – in New Jersey."**

**Nina Stack,  
Voice for New Jersey**

## Here are some things to keep in mind:

- In the first nine months of 2006 WWOR reported less than 10 hours of total news programming. Of that, a scant 2.66 hours (27%) was dedicated to New Jersey stories. WWOR rarely spent more than 10 minutes of news broadcasts dedicated to New Jersey coverage.
- According to WWOR's own data, over a seven year period from 1999-2006 they broadcast fewer than 170 New Jersey news stories per year. That is less than one New Jersey story every two days.
- Over the course of a 15 month study only 46% of New Jersey stories on WWOR covered government and politics. In its report, "Service to New Jersey," WWOR included sports stories to boost the number of local news stories they reported.
- In 2006 WWOR only aired 30 public affairs shows dedicated to New Jersey. The majority of these programs aired for only 30 minutes, meaning that WWOR averages less than 1.5 hours of public affairs programming per month.
- The station carried virtually no coverage of local and regional elections. In the 30 days prior to the 2005 New Jersey elections WWOR ran only 10 stories focused on the New Jersey election and 9 of those focused on the governor's race. 7 of the 10 stories aired in the final week before the election.
- Since acquiring the license for WWOR, Channel 9, Fox has repeatedly shown that it would rather incorporate the station into its New York City media empire rather than serve the citizens of New Jersey. For example, in 2004, Fox planned to move the bulk of the station's operations to New York City, prompting an outrage in New Jersey. In the face of Congressional pressure, Fox finally backed down and decided to remain in New Jersey.

- A brief look at the station's website is enough to show that the station is now targeting the New York audience, not the New Jersey one. The main station page has a picture of the New York City skyline, with the station's new name, "My 9 New York" displayed prominently.
- As of November 18, 2007, "New Jersey" does not appear once on the station's homepage. The weather section brings up the current weather conditions and forecast for Central Park, New York, rather than anywhere in New Jersey. The public affairs section gives a phone and fax number to contact the Public Affairs Department; both numbers have New York area codes.

## FCC Basics:

- The Federal Communications Commission was established by the Communications Act of 1934. Congress empowered the FCC to manage the public airwaves and telecommunications services. The FCC regulates TV and radio, telephone, cable, cell phone, and satellite companies.
- In the realm of broadcast television and radio, the FCC grants broadcast licenses — free of charge — to TV and radio stations in exchange for their commitment to serve community needs. The FCC has the power to fine stations or revoke licenses if the stations violate FCC rules. The FCC also regulates media ownership, including how many stations one company can own in each market and the cross-ownership of different sectors, such as broadcast stations and daily newspapers.
- The FCC does not pass laws. The FCC issues regulations and enforces laws enacted by Congress. Congress can overrule an FCC regulation, but this is uncommon.
- There are five FCC commissioners, all appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Only three commissioners can be members of the same political party. One of the commissioners is appointed by the president as chairman.
- **Chairman Kevin Martin**, a Republican, has served as a commissioner since 2001. He was named chairman by President Bush in March 2005. As Chairman, Martin is currently lobbying to significantly relax the longstanding prohibition on newspaper/broadcast cross-ownership.
- **Commissioner Michael Copps**, a Democrat, has served as a commissioner since 2001. Copps actively opposed the ownership rule changes in 2003.
- **Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein**, a Democrat, has served as a commissioner since 2002. Adelstein opposed the attempts to weaken broadcast ownership rules in 2003.
- **Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate**, a Republican, was sworn in as a commissioner in January 2006. Her position on ownership rules is not yet public, but she is known to vote with the Chairman.
- **Commissioner Robert McDowell**, a Republican, was sworn in as a commissioner in June 2006. His position on media ownership is unknown, but news stories suggest that, like the Chairman, Commissioner McDowell opposes ownership limits.

**"WWOR provides less coverage of New Jersey politics than most of the New York based television stations."**

**Senator  
Frank Lautenberg**

**"Fox's common ownership of the New York Post, WHYW (TV), and WWOR-TV harms me by sharply reducing the number of independent voices available to me."**

**Reverend  
Sherry M. Taylor**

For more information visit [www.StopBigMedia.com/=Newark](http://www.StopBigMedia.com/=Newark) or [www.VoiceNJ.com](http://www.VoiceNJ.com).