

SPEAK OUT AGAINST MEDIA MONOPOLIES



Contact the FCC

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

1-888-225-5322 [1-888-CALL FCC] Voice: toll-free
[888] 835-5322 [1-888-TELL FCC] TTY: toll-free
[202] 418-0710 FAX

Chairman Michael K. Powell: mpowell@fcc.gov
Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy: kabernat@fcc.gov
Commissioner Michael J. Copps: mcopps@fcc.gov
Commissioner Kevin J. Martin: kjmweb@fcc.gov
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein: jadelste@fcc.gov

www.fcc.gov

Tell the FCC to SAY NO TO MEDIA DEREGULATION

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates media ownership in the interest of preserving diversity in broadcast, print, & internet news and entertainment. It is comprised of 5 appointed commissioners, including chairman Michael Powell, son of Secretary of State Colin Powell. Very soon, the FCC board will vote on whether or not to deregulate media ownership. 2 of the 5 commissioners are staunchly against deregulation, arguing that it negates Constitutional protections which ensure freedom of speech & press. They came to Seattle on March 7, 2003 to urge citizens to voice their opinions by phone, email, or letters in support of localism, diversity, and competition in the media. A recent poll shows that 75% of Americans don't even know this is an issue. The FCC Commissioners themselves admitted this is because there is a news blackout on this story because it does not serve corporate media interests. They want you to speak out and about this issue to friends and family. This is not a left/right issue. This is about preserving democracy itself.

Why Media Regulation Is Necessary

Ever wonder why most commercial radio stations sound the same? Or why no Northwest bands have broken nationally since 1996? That's because in 1996, the FCC deregulated radio station ownership.

Before 1996, a company could own a maximum of 40 radio stations nationwide. 1996 deregulation removed this limit. So today, for example, Clear Channel owns 1,250 radio stations, including 5 in the Seattle market. Clear Channel also owns billboards and concert venues. Further deregulation would allow them to own TV stations and newspapers as well. Clear Channel CEO Lowry Mays has gone on record as saying, "We're not in the business of providing news and information. We're not in the business of providing well-researched music. We're simply in the business of selling our customers products." If deregulation occurs, attitudes like his will govern every American's access to information. This is not only bad for culture, but for democracy.

Limiting the number of media outlets any one company can own preserves a multiplicity of voices in media, which is the very foundation of democracy. If one company is allowed to own all the media in a community, that company becomes the only voice of the community, which leaves no room for debate or even an airing of news and views antagonistic to the vested corporate interests which place profits over public service. So far, 15,000 people have contacted the FCC to Say No to Deregulation. We need to increase that number exponentially. A massive outcry RIGHT NOW could swing that one crucial vote. Use word of mouth or email to spread the word about this issue, which Project Censored cited as the Number One Censored News Story of 2002. Remember, "No one made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little."

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