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December 17, 2009

Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

2101
Ref: 0901985

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

I write to you today to follow up on a letter I sent previously dated November 23, 2009. On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of constituents in my district who would be affected by the Sinclair-Mediacom retransmission rights negotiations, I write to solicit the FCC to protect my constituents and the public good.

As you are aware, Sinclair Broadcasting Group is currently renegotiating their retransmission rights with Mediacom Communications Corporation. A similar retransmission negotiation failed to reach a compromise back in 2007 and resulted in Mediacom customers losing Sinclair's Cedar Rapids based CBS station and Des Moines based FOX station. What was left was a four week impasse where thousands of households had to go without important local weather, news, and safety programming, as well as NFL playoff games, college football championships and Big Ten college basketball games.

The situation has only become more volatile in the interim years. The transition to digital television has placed a substantial number of my constituents in a situation where they rely on the cable that they subscribe to and lack the necessary hardware to receive digital terrestrial broadcasts. This is particularly true of low income Iowans and the elderly, who rely on Mediacom to convert Sinclair's digital broadcast signals to analog, so that they can continue using their older analog-only televisions. Sinclair has also, through an operating services agreement, acquired control over the Cedar Rapids FOX station, further permeating Sinclair's control over local broadcasts in my district.

The current rebroadcast agreement between Sinclair and Mediacom expires Dec 31st. The February 7th Super Bowl is on CBS. The January 5th Orange Bowl, in which the University of Iowa is playing their championship game

with Georgia Tech, is on FOX. Mediacom's broadcast area is highly populated with the fans and alumni of the University of Iowa, and hundreds of thousands of Iowans stand to lose their chance to watch their team in the Orange Bowl if the FCC does not take action to referee the Mediacom-Sinclair dispute.

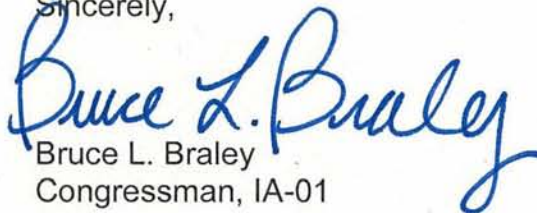
Sinclair Vice President Barry Faber said he does not think the standoff will be resolved before the Orange Bowl. "We continue to be willing to engage in negotiations, but right now I'm very pessimistic..." Faber was quoted as saying. He declined to say how much of a rate increase Sinclair wants.

I do not write to ask the FCC to take sides in this contentious negotiation. Rather, I ask that the FCC step in and take the appropriate actions to protect the public interest in the event that Mediacom and Sinclair are unable to come to terms on a retransmission consent agreement. At a minimum, the FCC should authorize interim carriage of the stations while the parties sort out their differences. As an addition or an alternative, the FCC should consider ordering the parties to submit to binding arbitration if no arms length agreement can be reached. Most importantly the interests of the public must come first.

Sporting events such as the Orange Bowl and the Super Bowl should not be taken hostage during a contentious negotiation like this. The FCC should step in and use its authority to prevent any interruption in broadcast service during this round of negotiations between the parties.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Bruce L. Braley
Congressman, IA-01