

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 20, 2010

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

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

We write in regards to the ongoing litigation in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit on the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 2003 and 2007 media ownership rules. We recognize that the FCC is currently conducting its quadrennial review of media ownership rules and that legal certainty with respect to the status of rules promulgated under prior Chairmen is important as the Commission moves forward in its process. We want to take this opportunity to remind you of the Senate's interest in public interest limits for media ownership and that the current Commission is under no obligation to follow the footsteps of its predecessors.

The last two FCC attempts to weaken the media ownership rules were met with considerable Congressional opposition. We were greatly concerned about the media ownership rules that the FCC issued on June 2, 2003 and the resulting consolidation they would have allowed. On September 16, 2003 the Senate passed a bipartisan resolution of disapproval that rejected those rules. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals shared many of our concerns and the FCC was forced to revisit some of those rules, including the rule on the common ownership of a daily newspaper and television station in the same media market.

In 2007, the FCC Chairman pushed through a rule that presumed that in large media markets, a newspaper and broadcast combination was in the public interest. The Senate disagreed that any greater media cross-ownership should be presumed to be in the public interest. Despite our calls for a deliberative and transparent process, the public was given only 28 days to comment on this major rule change. The Senate passed a bipartisan resolution of disapproval of these rules on May 15, 2008.

The strength of our democracy depends on a citizenry informed by local and diverse voices in our media. While Americans increasingly seek out news online, local newspapers and broadcast stations continue to be the dominant source of news and information. As you consider future action, we urge you not to forget the Senate's interest in maintaining the public interest goals of localism, diversity, and competition in our media.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Olympia Snowe", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.