



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 30, 2014

The Honorable Brian Higgins  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2459 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Higgins:

Thank you for your letter applauding the decision to take up a Commission vote to eliminate the FCC's sports blackout rule. I appreciate your long-standing interest in the issue.

I have made it a priority since becoming Chairman to review and reform FCC rules and processes, including eliminating or modifying those that no longer make sense. The sports blackout rule falls into this category.

The rule was established nearly 40 years ago when there was a concern about selling tickets because gate receipts were the principal source of revenue for the National Football League (NFL). That is no longer the case, and I do not believe the NFL needs the Commission's help to remain viable. Consequently, the Commission unanimously voted to eliminate the rule at today's Open Meeting.

To be clear, the Commission has heard from many consumers on both sides of the issue, and the NFL has actively participated in the process. Commission staff has carefully considered the impact on consumers, including whether elimination of the rule would result in the games' being moved from free, over-the-air broadcasts to subscription-based services. As you note, even though the Commission eliminated the rule, it does not mean that sports blackout policies will cease to exist. The sports leagues can continue to enforce their blackout policies through private contractual agreements, if they choose to do so.

Thanks again for your support and continued interest in this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", is written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler



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THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

September 30, 2014

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate  
702 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Thank you for your letter applauding the decision to take up a Commission vote to eliminate the FCC's sports blackout rule. I appreciate your long-standing interest in the issue.

I have made it a priority since becoming Chairman to review and reform FCC rules and processes, including eliminating or modifying those that no longer make sense. The sports blackout rule falls into this category.

The rule was established nearly 40 years ago when there was a concern about selling tickets because gate receipts were the principal source of revenue for the National Football League (NFL). That is no longer the case, and I do not believe the NFL needs the Commission's help to remain viable. Consequently, the Commission unanimously voted to eliminate the rule at today's Open Meeting.

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September 30, 2014

The Honorable Cory Booker  
United States Senate  
141 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Booker:

Thank you for your letter applauding the decision to take up a Commission vote to eliminate the FCC's sports blackout rule. I appreciate your long-standing interest in the issue.

I have made it a priority since becoming Chairman to review and reform FCC rules and processes, including eliminating or modifying those that no longer make sense. The sports blackout rule falls into this category.

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WASHINGTON

September 30, 2014

The Honorable Sherrod Brown  
United States Senate  
713 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

Thank you for your letter applauding the decision to take up a Commission vote to eliminate the FCC's sports blackout rule. I appreciate your long-standing interest in the issue.

I have made it a priority since becoming Chairman to review and reform FCC rules and processes, including eliminating or modifying those that no longer make sense. The sports blackout rule falls into this category.

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WASHINGTON

September 30, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
United States Senate  
731 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Harkin:

Thank you for your letter applauding the decision to take up a Commission vote to eliminate the FCC's sports blackout rule. I appreciate your long-standing interest in the issue.

I have made it a priority since becoming Chairman to review and reform FCC rules and processes, including eliminating or modifying those that no longer make sense. The sports blackout rule falls into this category.

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Tom Wheeler



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September 30, 2014

The Honorable John McCain  
United States Senate  
241 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

Thank you for your letter applauding the decision to take up a Commission vote to eliminate the FCC's sports blackout rule. I appreciate your long-standing interest in the issue.

I have made it a priority since becoming Chairman to review and reform FCC rules and processes, including eliminating or modifying those that no longer make sense. The sports blackout rule falls into this category.

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