

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

396

May 21, 2018

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioners,

Some have recently suggested weakening the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) "Kid Vid" rules, which require free, over-the-air TV broadcasters to air a minimum of three hours of children's educational programming per week. We respectfully disagree. These children's programming rules remain essential for ensuring that kids around the country have access to quality educational content, including low income families who may lack access to pay-TV and online streaming options. Undermining "Kid Vid" rules would leave these families with fewer opportunities to provide their kids with important educational programming.

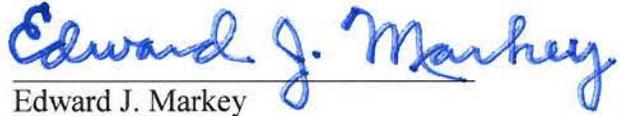
Congress acknowledged the importance of children's educational programming with the Children's Television Act of 1990, which emphasized the need for educational and informational programming for children. In response, the FCC adopted the "Kid Vid" rules in 1996, requiring broadcasters to air an average of at least three hours of core children's educational and informational programming per week to maintain their licenses.

"Kid Vid" rules remain important today, especially for the many underserved families who rely on free broadcast stations for educational content. Many families cannot access or afford the broadband speeds necessary for streaming online video and have trouble paying for monthly pay-TV subscription services. The "Kid Vid" rules (and especially the mandatory programming hours requirement) make sure that these children have access to quality content to help them learn and thrive in school. Recent reports question whether alternative platforms, like the internet, deliver this same type of quality children's programming.

Additionally, weakening these rules could spell the end to crucial advertising guidelines limiting the duration of commercials and enforcing the clear separation between content and advertising in children's programming. The FCC has long recognized that children are vulnerable to advertising because children have difficulty distinguishing between content and advertisements, particularly when ads are interwoven into content. This sort of interweaving has become especially prevalent in online videos, which include sponsored videos presented as content but actually serving as ads for toys and other products. As more content is available on online streaming services, these advertising rules become increasingly important to ensure children do not mistake interwoven ads for content, and to ensure certain educational programming is not regularly interrupted by advertising.

We respectfully request that the FCC maintain the “Kid Vid” rules in their current form, and reject calls to open a proceeding on these critical protections for our nation’s children.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Bill Nelson
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator