



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

March 1, 2019

The Honorable Cory Booker  
United States Senate  
359 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Booker:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's quadrennial review of the broadcast ownership rules in light of the recent unanimous decision of the Commission to renew the license of WWOR-TV. The Commission's thorough 27-page order regarding that renewal explains why under federal law and our Constitution the agency reached this decision. Among other things, the order exhaustively reviewed the evidence provided by WWOR-TV showing that it had met its legal obligations. Even the evidence presented by those seeking denial of the license renewal ultimately supported the finding that WWOR-TV significantly covered New-Jersey-centric issues, including New Jersey politics.

As you know, the Commission's role in reviewing license renewals, including that of WWOR-TV, and in overseeing the broadcasting segment of the media marketplace is limited—and appropriately so. Under the First Amendment, the Commission cannot and should not dictate to stations what programming they should air or what they should cover. The Federal Communications Commission has no business putting itself in the newsroom to second-guess the editorial decisions of journalists.

Instead, and especially given that competition for viewers is more fierce than ever before, our role is to establish a framework that will allow local journalists and broadcasters to thrive and serve their communities to the best of their abilities. That means eliminating rules like the 80-year-old main-studio rule that imposed unnecessary and unduly burdensome costs on broadcasters with little public benefit. And that means exploring, as required by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, whether any existing broadcast ownership regulations should be eliminated because they no longer remain "necessary in the public interest as a result of competition." The quadrennial review we have commenced is intended to do just that.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai".

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

March 1, 2019

The Honorable Robert Menendez  
United States Senate  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Menendez:

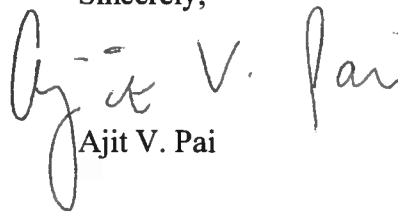
Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's quadrennial review of the broadcast ownership rules in light of the recent unanimous decision of the Commission to renew the license of WWOR-TV. The Commission's thorough 27-page order regarding that renewal explains why under federal law and our Constitution the agency reached this decision. Among other things, the order exhaustively reviewed the evidence provided by WWOR-TV showing that it had met its legal obligations. Even the evidence presented by those seeking denial of the license renewal ultimately supported the finding that WWOR-TV significantly covered New-Jersey-centric issues, including New Jersey politics.

As you know, the Commission's role in reviewing license renewals, including that of WWOR-TV, and in overseeing the broadcasting segment of the media marketplace is limited—and appropriately so. Under the First Amendment, the Commission cannot and should not dictate to stations what programming they should air or what they should cover. The Federal Communications Commission has no business putting itself in the newsroom to second-guess the editorial decisions of journalists.

Instead, and especially given that competition for viewers is more fierce than ever before, our role is to establish a framework that will allow local journalists and broadcasters to thrive and serve their communities to the best of their abilities. That means eliminating rules like the 80-year-old main-studio rule that imposed unnecessary and unduly burdensome costs on broadcasters with little public benefit. And that means exploring, as required by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, whether any existing broadcast ownership regulations should be eliminated because they no longer remain "necessary in the public interest as a result of competition." The quadrennial review we have commenced is intended to do just that.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "A".  
Ajit V. Pai