

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL
CONCURRING**

Re: *Amendment of Section 73.3556 of the Commission's Rules Regarding Duplication of Programming on Commonly Owned Radio Stations*, MB Docket No. 19-310; *Modernization of Media Regulation Initiative*, MB Docket No. 17-105.

This week, PEN America—an organization devoted to the freedom of expression—released a new report on the status of local news in this country. Comb through it and you will find words like crisis, closure, and cuts. It details how newspapers and broadcasters are grappling with how to continue to produce the journalism and newsgathering that Americans rely on every day. It's important because we need this news to make informed decisions about our communities, our country, and our democracy.

Research shows that local news remains the most trusted form of journalism. It is also the news medium closest to the work of the Federal Communications Commission. That's because when we issue licenses for broadcasting, those licenses represent a public trust—and they come with a unique duty. Under the law, they are required to serve their community.

I think this background is essential context for today's rulemaking. It proposes to change a rule that prevents radio station licensees from devoting more than a quarter of their time to programming that duplicates another station in the same market. This policy was designed to support radio localism, competition, and diversity. Take it away and the quantity of local programming in any local market could easily decline. Newsgathering could fall by the wayside. Journalism jobs could be cut—in media markets where they are already cut to the bone. Instead of promoting such outcomes, I think we should be strengthening the institutions we have to support the production of local news and information.

I appreciate that we need to modernize our policies to reflect new realities for radio broadcasting. I also appreciate that my colleagues included some additional questions in this rulemaking at my request but hope that any changes we make do not lead listeners to find fewer voices and sources of local news the next time they tune in. I choose to concur.