

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 27th, 2021

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Ms. Christine M. McCarthy
EVP Corporate Finance and Treasurer
The Walt Disney Company
500 South Buena Vista Street
Burbank, California 91521

Mr. Christopher Ripley
President & CEO
Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc.
10706 Beaver Dam Road
Hunt Valley, MD 21030

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Acting Chairwoman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Ms. McCarthy and Mr. Ripley:

I write to express concern regarding the ongoing dispute between the Walt Disney Company's Hulu + Live TV streaming service and Sinclair Broadcast Group, which owns 21 regional sports networks (RSNs). Since October 2020, Hulu subscribers in Ohio have not had access to various RSNs, including Fox Sports Ohio and SportsTime Ohio, which were previously included in their Live TV plans.

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to worsen and more sports venues close their doors to fans, it is more important now than ever that we foster community, hope, and social connection by offering Ohioans and communities across the country reliable access to local sporting events. The nature of most professional sports leagues' broadcasting agreements – under which national broadcasters can pick and choose the most lucrative games – dictate that fans have to rely on RSNs to cover most of their home teams' games. The dispute between Disney and Sinclair threatens to cut off over 100,000 Ohio Hulu subscribers' access to their local teams, save for a few opportunities to watch them play on a national stage.

This dispute disrupted some Columbus Crew fans' ability to watch the final regular season games in the run-up to the team's successful Major League Soccer Cup playoff campaign and has already affected viewership as the Cleveland Cavaliers and Columbus Blue Jackets have gotten their respective seasons underway. As an Ohio sports fan, and on behalf of the fans of all of Ohio's professional teams, I hope that you will work to reach an equitable agreement as soon as possible, without affecting Ohioans' access to their local teams.

I encourage all parties to continue good-faith negotiations and prioritize Ohio consumers' access to their local teams. I also ask that the Commission continue to monitor this situation closely and

facilitate the resolution of the ongoing dispute promptly and impartially. We must hold companies accountable for any practices that disadvantage consumers, especially in times of public health and economic crises. Thank you for your consideration, and please keep my office informed of any further action.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator