

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 19, 2025

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The Honorable Brendan Carr
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Carr:

We are increasingly concerned that your unprecedented weaponization of the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) amounts to an unlawful attempt to corruptly wield government authority to chill First Amendment-protected speech and independent, fact-based news reporting. As the FCC has failed to provide substantive replies to congressional letters regarding these concerns, we write to invite you to appear before Members of Congress and the American people to explain what appear to be egregious abuses of the FCC’s authorities.

On September 15, 2025, Jimmy Kimmel, host of Jimmy Kimmel Live!, made a series of comments about the reaction to the assassination of Charlie Kirk.¹ Within hours of your direct threat that media companies “can find ways to change conduct and take action, frankly, on Kimmel, or there’s going to be additional work for the F.C.C. ahead,”² ABC took Kimmel’s show off the air immediately and indefinitely.³ Your and President Trump’s abuse of your self-described “powerful positions” to censor Stephen Colbert, Jimmy Kimmel, and others threaten a bedrock fundamental of our democracy, as you identified in 2022: “Free speech gives the powerless a voice. It ensures that anyone can challenge the political, religious, or scientific orthodoxy of the moment.”⁴

Our concerns go far beyond the suspension of Jimmy Kimmel’s show. We have sought information regarding our concerns multiple times and have not received complete responses. Senator Blumenthal wrote to the FCC twice since March with specific concerns about how you and the agency appear to be engaged in a campaign of deliberate abuse of the FCC’s regulatory authorities at the behest of President Trump. On March 12, 2025, Senator Blumenthal wrote to the Acting Chiefs of the FCC’s enforcement and media bureaus questioning the agency’s investigations of entities perceived to be opposed to President Trump and demanding information

¹ John Koblin, Michael M. Grynbaum, & Brooks Barnes, *ABC Pulls Jimmy Kimmel Off Air for Charlie Kirk Comments After F.C.C. Pressure*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/17/business/media/abc-jimmy-kimmel.html>; Jonathan Yerushalmy & Edward Helmore, ‘Censoring you in real time’: suspension of Jimmy Kimmel show sparks shock and fears for free speech, THE GUARDIAN (Sept. 18, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/sep/18/jimmy-kimmel-suspension-sparks-shock-fears-for-free-speech-censoring-realtime>.

² John Koblin, et al., *supra* note 1.

³ ABC News, *ABC preempts 'Jimmy Kimmel Live!', network says* (Sept. 18, 2025), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/abc-preempts-jimmy-kimmel-live/story?id=125690074>.

⁴ Brendan Carr (@BrendanCarrFCC), TWITTER (Dec. 12, 2022), <https://x.com/BrendanCarrFCC/status/1602405738667728896>.

and records to clarify the agency's actions.⁵ Your March 26, 2025, response addresses none of the specific questions posed in Senator Blumenthal's letter.⁶ On July 29, 2025, following the highly suspect timing of the FCC's approval of Paramount Global's merger with Skydance Media, LLC—just three weeks after Paramount settled a frivolous lawsuit brought by President Trump by handing \$16 million to his Presidential Library—Senator Blumenthal wrote to you demanding detailed answers and records that would begin to provide transparency into the Trump Administration's apparent corrupt bargain with Paramount.⁷ Again you responded by failing to meaningfully address the specific questions in Senator Blumenthal's letter and produced no responsive records.⁸

Senator Warren wrote to Paramount Chair Shari Redstone in May 2025 with questions regarding whether Paramount may have been engaging in potentially illegal conduct involving your agency in exchange for approval of its megamerger.⁹ The questions raised in her letter include why Paramount abruptly shifted from characterizing the lawsuit brought by President Trump as “meritless”¹⁰ to engaging in settlement negotiations and potentially meddling with the content of its subsidiary CBS to appease the Trump administration. In July, Senator Warren called for a full investigation into whether any anti-bribery laws were broken in response to news that Paramount settled President Trump's lawsuit for \$16 million, concerned this could be bribery in plain sight.¹¹ Days later, Senator Warren wrote to Skydance to seek information on the reported secret deal between Skydance and President Trump—potentially involving public service announcements worth between \$15 million and \$20 million that “support conservative causes supported by President Trump”¹²—and whether the deal was connected to the companies' efforts to secure FCC approval of their megamerger.¹³ Paramount and Skydance's dodgy

⁵ Letter from The Hon. Richard Blumenthal, Ranking Member, Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations to Mr. Patrick Webre, Acting Bureau Chief, Enforcement Bureau & Ms. Erin Boone, Acting Bureau Chief, Media Bureau, Fed. Communications Commission (Mar. 12, 2025), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025-3-12-Letter-from-Sen.-Richard-Blumenthal-to-Patrick-Webre-and-Erin-Boone.pdf>.

⁶ Letter from The Hon. Brendan Carr, Chairman, Fed. Commc'n Comm'n to The Hon. Richard Blumenthal, Ranking Member, Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations (Mar. 26, 2025), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-410581A2.pdf>.

⁷ Letter from The Hon. Richard Blumenthal, Ranking Member, Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations to The Hon. Brendan Carr, Chairman, Fed. Communications Commission (July 29, 2025), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025-07-29-Letter-from-Ranking-Member-Blumenthal-to-FCC-Chair-Brendan-Carr.pdf>.

⁸ Letter from The Hon. Brendan Carr, Chairman, Fed. Communications Commission to The Hon. Richard Blumenthal, Ranking Member, Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations (Aug. 12, 2025), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-414089A2.pdf>.

⁹ Letter from The Hon. Elizabeth Warren to Shari Redstone, Chair, Paramount Global (May 19, 2025), https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_paramount_re_cbs_lawsuit_and_corruption.pdf.

¹⁰ Jeremy Barr, *CBS owner Paramount settles Trump lawsuit over Harris interview for \$16M*, WASH. POST (Jul. 2, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/media/2025/07/02/paramount-cbs-settlement-trump-harris-interview/>.

¹¹ Press Release, Warren Calls for Investigation Into Paramount Settlement with Trump (Jul. 2, 2025), <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-calls-for-investigation-into-paramount-settlement-with-trump>.

¹² Todd Spangler, *Trump Claims '60 Minutes' Settlement Is Worth as Much as \$35 Million Including 'Advertising'; Paramount Denies Deal Includes PSAs*, VARIETY (Jul. 4, 2025), <https://variety.com/2025/tv/news/trump-60-minutes-lawsuit-settlement-advertising-35-million-paramount-psa-1236447353/>.

¹³ Letter from The Hon. Elizabeth Warren to David Ellison, CEO, Skydance Media (Jul. 21, 2025), https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren_sanders_wyden_letter_to_skydance_on_paramount_settlement.pdf.

responses to Senator Warren's letters raised even more questions about whether the companies engaged in corrupt side deals or handed out favors to get their merger approved by the FCC.¹⁴

Congress and the American people deserve answers regarding whether the FCC violated the law and the public trust. Accordingly, we invite you to participate in a public forum that will offer you the opportunity to explain the FCC's actions and answer questions from Members of Congress. I look forward to working with you to find a date and time that works with your schedule. Please confirm your participation by September 23, 2025.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

¹⁴ Press Release, Warren on Skydance, Paramount Dodgy Responses: "We Need an Independent Investigation" (Aug. 1, 2025), <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-on-skydance-paramount-dodgy-responses-we-need-an-independent-investigation>.