



from the Office of Commissioner Anna M. Gomez

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**GOMEZ ON PUBLIC RESPONSE TO FCC CAMPAIGN OF
CENSORSHIP AND CONTROL AGAINST LOCAL ABC STATIONS
AND DISNEY**

WASHINGTON — FCC Commissioner Anna M. Gomez issued the following statement after the comment period closed for a proceeding initiated by the FCC against local ABC stations and Disney to punish speech this administration dislikes, in violation of the First Amendment and the law that governs the agency:

“When given the chance to weigh in on whether to allow the FCC to continue its campaign of censorship and control, the American public showed up in a big way, and the vast majority who spoke up delivered the same message. They believe in the value of their local news, they trust those who cover their communities, and they understand that the FCC has no business deciding who is a journalist and what counts as real news. A small number of partisan voices tried to hijack this process into a referendum on a network they dislike, but the public refuses to let local stations become collateral damage in the FCC's political games. The FCC has no authority to police the ideological balance of the airwaves, and no matter what this Commission does next, the record now makes clear that this was never a genuine search for the public interest.”

Background:

Since the FCC launched its unprecedented effort to simultaneously revoke the broadcast licenses of Disney's eight owned and operated ABC stations, through a process that had not been invoked in more than half a century, the agency has received an outpouring of comments defending these stations' First Amendment rights and opposing the FCC's effort to punish speech this administration dislikes. In the docket covering the early license renewal proceeding, the agency received more than 150,000 comments. In the docket covering the FCC's effort to unwind a more than two-decade old precedent recognizing the interview portion of "The View" as a bona fide news program, the agency received nearly 80,000 comments. In both dockets, totaling more than 230,000 comments, the vast majority of commenters defended the stations and rejected the FCC's attempt to use its licensing authority to punish constitutionally protected speech.

Earlier this week, a [bipartisan group](#) of former FCC officials filed comments calling the proceeding against these stations unprecedented and warning that the agency is trying to send “a chilling message to all broadcasters” who carry speech this administration dislikes. Days earlier, a coalition of [conservative and free market organizations](#) urged the FCC to abandon the proceeding, warning that turning license renewal into a political weapon could

just as easily be used against conservative and religious broadcasters in the future.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).