

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 7, 2006

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

We have noted with interest recent reports that you intend to revisit the issue of media ownership at the next meeting of the Federal Communications Commission on June 15, 2006. If the FCC does in fact consider this issue, then we hope that the Commission will strengthen existing rules, and not further damage an already weak structure intended to protect diversity in American broadcasting. Put simply, we believe that any action on media ownership similar to what was proposed by the FCC in 2003 would be an unmitigated disaster.

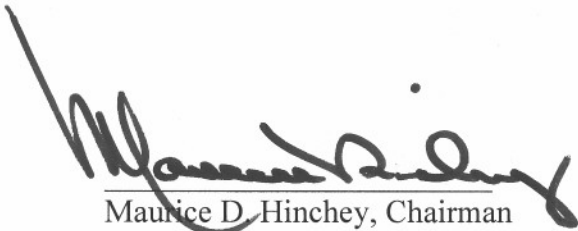
Since their enactment in the 1940s, our media ownership rules have been a vital safeguard, ensuring that the power to inform the public is not inappropriately concentrated among a relative few. But since the 1996 Telecommunications Act, we have seen a significant relaxation of the media ownership caps limiting the number of outlets that one company may own in a single market. The unfortunate effect has been consolidation of newspapers, television channels, radio stations, and other media under the control of a handful of giant media conglomerates. The resulting monopoly situations have forced independent broadcasters out of business, limited minority ownership, and denied the American public the wide array of content they deserve.

The FCC's 2003 proposal to weaken the local TV ownership limits, national TV ownership caps, and newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rules would have delivered a fatal blow to our media ownership infrastructure. For example, if these rules had been enacted, a single corporation would have been allowed to acquire as many as three television stations, eight radio stations, and the only daily newspaper -- all within a single city. While such action would not have caused a media blackout *per se*, it would have essentially reduced content to a single source, rather than providing communities with the full array of information that should truly be available. As you know, millions of Americans and dozens of Senators and Representatives have contacted the FCC to express their concern about the proposed rules. The Third Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals echoed these concerns by remanding the issue back to the Commission in June 2004.


As Members of Congress who are deeply concerned about the impact that further media consolidation would have upon our democracy, we believe that the Federal Communications Commission should fulfill its intended role as a strong defender of diversity in broadcasting. We hope that the FCC will move to strengthen existing ownership rules to guarantee an array of content and wide variety of viewpoints for everyone seeking news, information, and culture across our country.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to your reply.

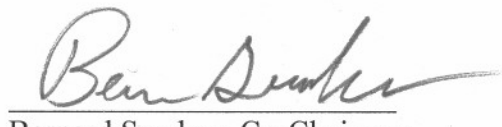
Sincerely,




Maurice D. Hinchey, Chairman
Future of American Media Caucus



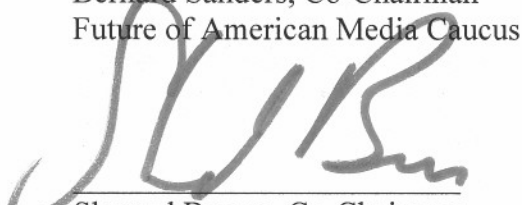
David Price, Co-Chairman
Future of American Media Caucus



Bernard Sanders, Co-Chairman
Future of American Media Caucus



Louise Slaughter, Co-Chairwoman
Future of American Media Caucus




Sherrod Brown, Co-Chairman
Future of American Media Caucus



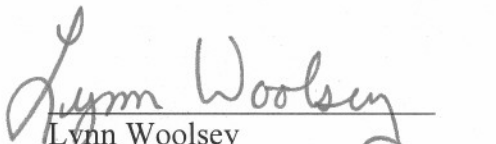
Diane Watson, Founding Member
Future of American Media Caucus



Marcy Kaptur
Future of American Media Caucus



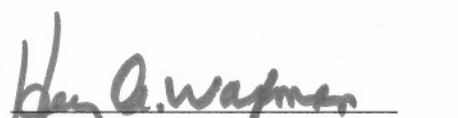
Ed Case
Future of American Media Caucus



Lynn Woolsey
Future of American Media Caucus



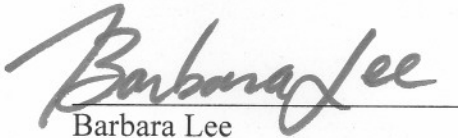
Jim McDermott
Future of American Media Caucus



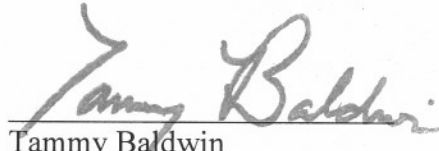
Henry Waxman
Future of American Media Caucus



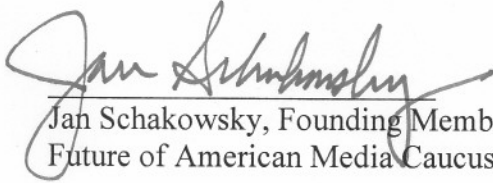
Peter DeFazio
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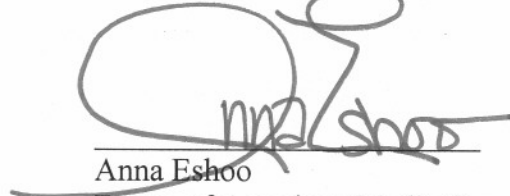
Barbara Lee
Future of American Media Caucus



Tammy Baldwin
Future of American Media Caucus



Jan Schakowsky, Founding Member
Future of American Media Caucus



Anna Eshoo
Future of American Media Caucus