



March 10, 2004

Dear Representative :

As the House takes up H.R. 3717, the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act of 2004, we urge you to allow amendments to be offered that delay implementation of the Federal Communications Commission's ownership rules, until the impact of media consolidation on indecent programming is studied.

On June 2, 2003, the FCC adopted rules that would allow a single company to own up to three television stations, eight radio stations, the major newspaper, and the cable system in a given community. These rules, which would spur greater media consolidation, are troubling because of their direct impact on healthy democratic debate and local community values.

We believe that any effort to give families and local communities greater say in what is broadcast over the public airwaves must address the growing threat of media consolidation. Sensible media ownership rules would give citizens a wide range of programming choices from diverse sources; reduce the impact of massive conglomerates on local broadcast content; and preserve the system of checks and balances between local media outlets.

We strongly urge you to allow amendments to be offered that would reinstate the ownership rules in place before the FCC's June 2 order, until a GAO study is completed on the link between media consolidation and indecency.

Sincerely,

Center for Digital Democracy
Common Cause
Consumers Union
Consumer Federation of America
Free Press
Future of Music Coalition

Media Access Project
Media Alliance
Media Challenge
The Newspaper Guild-CWA
U.S. PIRG