

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 17, 2026

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The Honorable Brendan Carr  
The Honorable Anna Gomez  
The Honorable Olivia Trusty  
Federal Communications Commission  
45 L Street NE  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Carr, Commissioner Gomez, and Commissioner Trusty:

We write to express our strong opposition to any effort by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to modify or waive long-standing statutory limits on broadcast television consolidation. These limits exist for one clear reason: to ensure that local communities have access to diverse and independent voices.

In the 2004 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Congress established a bright-line statute prohibiting any one company from owning TV stations reaching more than 39 percent of Americans. Congress's intent was clear: no single company should be allowed to dominate what Americans see, hear, and pay for on local television. This 39 percent cap was deliberately written into law and removed from the FCC's discretion to review.

That statutory cap is now being tested by proposed media consolidation, including the pending Nexstar-TEGNA merger, which would combine the nation's largest and second-largest television station groups (measured by national audience reach) and result in a single broadcaster controlling 265 stations and reaching roughly 80 percent of U.S. households, far exceeding the 39% audience reach cap. Approving such a deal would require the FCC to ignore clear limits set by Congress and would set dangerous precedent. Simply put, the FCC does not have the authority to waive or change this limit – regardless of the President's views of the merger or his recent social media post instructing the Commission to “GET THAT DEAL DONE.” Only Congress can change that statute.

Beyond the legal concerns, excessive media consolidation has real consequences for our constituents. When a small number of companies control more local stations, they gain greater leverage to demand higher fees from cable, satellite, and other video providers — costs that are ultimately passed on to consumers. Working families already struggling with rising household expenses would be forced to pay more each month just to access the same local channels they receive today. Allowing further consolidation beyond the statutory cap would only accelerate this

dynamic: Nexstar executives have openly acknowledged that the merger will empower the company to extract at least \$135 million more each year for access to the same programming.

At the same time, consolidation also decimates local newsrooms and reduces local news. When ownership is concentrated in fewer hands, local newsrooms are often downsized or eliminated altogether, resulting in job losses. Reporters who know their communities, cover city halls and school boards, and hold local institutions accountable are replaced with centralized programming that does not reflect local needs or perspectives. What remains is often duplicated newscasts and national content that crowds out the very local coverage that is supposed to distinguish local broadcast television from online platforms. As a result, communities lose trusted sources of information at a time when accurate, local news is more important than ever.

These harms fall especially hard on Black communities and other communities of color. Local broadcast television remains a primary source of news and emergency information for many Black households. When local voices are silenced and newsrooms shrink, it limits civic engagement, reduces representation, and narrows opportunities for journalists of color in an already-constrained labor market.

Congress put broadcast ownership limits in place to prevent exactly these outcomes – to protect local communities, promote diverse viewpoints, and ensure that local television serves the public interest, not just corporate shareholders.

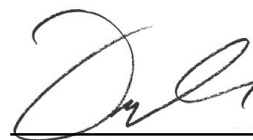
For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Federal Communications Commission to follow the law Congress enacted, to reject any attempt to weaken or waive the 39 percent national television ownership cap, and to deny approval of any merger – including the proposed Nexstar–TEGNA transaction – that clearly violates that statutory limit. Further, a matter of this significance, involving an attempt to waive a clear Congressional statute, demands a transparent vote of the full Commission and cannot appropriately be delegated to the staff level.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Wesley Bell  
Member of Congress



Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
Member of Congress

*Steven Horsford*

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Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

*Robin L. Kelly*

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**Re:** MB Docket No. 25-331; MB Docket No. 17-318; MB Docket No. 22-459

Dear Chairman Carr, Commissioner Gomez, and Commissioner Trusty:

Enclosed please find correspondence from Members of Congress regarding MB Docket No. 25-331 (Applications to Transfer Control of TEGNA Inc. to Nexstar Media Inc.), MB Docket No. 17-318 (National Television Multiple Ownership Rule), and MB Docket No. 22-459 (2022 Quadrennial Regulatory Review).

Due to an administrative oversight, the original letter did not include these docket references. We respectfully request that the enclosed correspondence be entered into the record for each of the above proceedings and considered as part of the Commission's review.

Sincerely,  
Wesley Bell

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W Bell', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Member of Congress  
On behalf of the undersigned Members of Congress