



September 8, 2025

The Honorable Brendan Carr  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
45 L Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Carr:

We, the undersigned conservative, free-market and pro-innovation organizations, write in support of your efforts to reduce government regulation and involvement in the communications sector. Your work to delete rules that are stifling growth and investment in the sectors overseen by the Federal Communications Commission will help unleash a golden age for America's economy.

It is for that reason that we respectfully urge you to avoid intervening, either directly or indirectly, in the free-market negotiations between broadcast networks and affiliates.<sup>1</sup> Intervention risks *de facto* rate regulation and other market distortions that would undermine the streak of deregulatory wins that you have championed as FCC chairman.

We share your goals of removing the regulatory shackles that have, for too long, held back the highly regulated communications sector. As you've noted, legacy ownership caps on broadcast television and radio operators have discouraged investment in local news.<sup>2</sup> We support your efforts to review and update or remove these rules as necessary. Modernizing media regulations could ensure that government regulation is not an obstacle to broadcasters' ability to compete on a level regulatory playing field. Indeed,

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Chairman Brendan Carr, Federal Communications Commission, to CEO Brian Roberts, Comcast. (July 29, 2025). <https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/carr-letter-comcast-july2025.pdf>; Letter from Chairman Brendan Carr, Federal Communications Commission, to CEO Bob Iger, The Walt Disney Company. (Dec. 21, 2024). <https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/Carr-Letter-to-Disney-12212024.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> 2018 Quadrennial Regulatory Review - Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, MB Docket No. 18-349, Report and Order, 38 FCC Rcd 12782 at 12874 (rel. Dec. 26, 2023) (dissenting statement of Comm'r Carr, stating, "This company wanted to invest in the Powell station and originate live and local programming for this underserved community. But they couldn't. Not because they lacked the capital or a willing seller, but because the FCC wouldn't let them.").



broadcasters are already availing themselves of this deregulatory environment by exploring new deals and investments.<sup>3</sup>

However, we are concerned about any FCC steps that would open the door to rate regulation or other regulatory interventions in those private sector, business-to-business negotiations. As former Republican Senator Roy Blunt argued in a recent op-ed, “The answer is not to continue burdening more of the modern media environment, but to modernize the regulatory structure itself, relaxing TV ownership limitations so that every player, both digital and traditional, large and small, can compete on fair terms.”<sup>4</sup>

Throughout your career, you have rightfully led the charge against price controls pushed by your Democrat predecessors and Democrats in Congress and the White House.<sup>5</sup> While the FCC under the Obama Administration signaled a desire to intervene in broadcasters’ contract negotiations over programming issues, they stopped short of taking formal regulatory action.<sup>6</sup>

Broadcasters are perfectly capable of deciding whether and when to enter in or end an affiliation agreement with a network. For example, WPLG-TV in Miami ended an affiliation with ABC in 2023, determining that ABC’s terms were not in the broadcaster’s interest. As a result, the station pledged to hire more local talent and expand local news and programming.<sup>7</sup> This follows other examples of stations unaffiliating from networks and continuing to serve local communities, including WJXT in Jacksonville,<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Nicholas G. Miller, Nexstar to Buy Tegna for \$6.2 Billion, WALL STREET JOURNAL (Aug. 19, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/business/deals/nexstar-teгна-deal-talks-0e1d7524>.

<sup>4</sup> Roy Blunt, *Deregulating The Media Is How We Save Local News*, DAILY CALLER, July 22, 2025, <https://dailycaller.com/2025/07/22/federal-communications-commission-deregulation-modernize-media-former-senator-roy-blunt-missouri/>.

<sup>5</sup> *Implementing the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: Prevention and Elimination of Digital Discrimination*, GN Docket No. 22-69, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 38 FCC Rcd 11440 (rel. Nov. 20, 2023) (dissenting statement of Comm’r Carr).

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., *Amendment of the Commission’s Rules Related to Retransmission Consent*, MB Docket No. 10-71, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 26 FCC Rcd 2718 (rel. Mar. 3, 2011) (proposing revisions to the Commission’s rules governing retransmission consent negotiations).

<sup>7</sup> *The Future of Local 10: Frequently Asked Questions*, WPLG Local 10, (May 19, 2025), updated (Aug. 7, 2025), <https://www.local10.com/station/2025/05/19/the-future-of-local-10-frequently-asked-questions/>.

<sup>8</sup> Steve McClellan, *Jacksonville’s WJXT (TV) Ends CBS Affiliation*, BROADCASTING & CABLE (Apr. 3, 2002), <https://www.nexttv.com/news/jacksonvilles-wjxttv-ends-cbs-affiliation-92014>.



WHDH in Boston,<sup>9</sup> and KPYX in the San Francisco Bay Area.<sup>10</sup> These and other broadcasters have responded to market forces and consumer demand and have successfully adapted to the outcomes of their market negotiations with networks—all without government involvement.

Conservatives have long understood that free negotiation between private parties more often leads to fair outcomes. Government is best positioned to enforce contracts, not dictate their terms.<sup>11</sup> Under your leadership, the FCC is effectively getting government out of the way across industries—from media and broadband networks to the space economy. We urge you to avoid disrupting that success by avoiding unintended market distortions in the broadcast sector. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to continuing to support your pro-growth agenda.

Sincerely,

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<sup>9</sup> Laura Hazard Owen, *Dropped by NBC, Boston's WHDH Is Placing a Big Bet on Local News and Aims to Be "DVR-Proof"*, NIEMAN LAB (Feb. 15, 2017), <https://www.niemanlab.org/2017/02/dropped-by-nbc-bostons-whdh-is-placing-a-big-bet-on-local-news-and-aims-to-be-dvr-proof/>.

<sup>10</sup> Michael P. Hill, *Inside the Rebranding of CBS Stations' Independents*, NEWSCASTSTUDIO (Sept. 15, 2023), <https://www.newscaststudio.com/2023/09/15/cbs-stations-independents-rebranding-cw/>.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Use of Knowledge in Society*, 35 Am. Econ. Rev. 519 (1945).

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