

WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA, WEST
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WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA, EAST
555 West 57th Street, Ste. 1230
New York, NY 10019

May 12, 2008

United States Senator Byron Dorgan
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3405

Dear Senator Dorgan,

On behalf of the Writers Guilds of America, East and West, we are writing to express our support for Senate Joint Resolution 28 – a resolution of disapproval of the Federal Communications Commission’s decision to allow for increased cross-ownership of newspaper and broadcast outlets. If allowed to move forward, we believe the actions of the FCC will lead to even greater consolidation of the nation’s major media outlets. This will most likely result in a dramatic reduction in the quality and amount of local news coverage throughout the country and severely impact workers in the news media.

Already, we have seen first-hand the effects of media consolidation in all facets of our industry. From entertainment to journalism, there are fewer independent voices in mainstream media. Fewer voices mean fewer viewpoints, a very real and present threat to the democratic principles of our nation.

The recent actions by the FCC would permit newspaper-broadcast combinations in the top 20 U.S. markets, many of which already are dominated by a handful of multinational media companies. This rule has the potential to affect local news markets for over 120 million Americans, and could threaten local news coverage for one-third of the American public.

What’s more, the new waiver policy contained in the cross-ownership rule may allow for the further consolidation of newspapers and television stations in many other markets. Given the FCC’s history of permissiveness with respect to waivers, and the vagueness of the new rules, the Writers Guilds of America fear this action will trigger a new wave of media consolidation detrimental to communities that rely on local newspapers or television affiliates for local coverage.

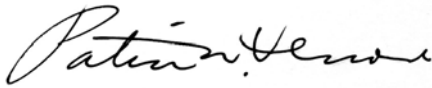
Even without this rule, WGA members have had to fight the downsizing of news operations throughout the country. In the past few weeks alone, a number of local television stations have announced significant layoffs in their news operations. For example, in early April, CBS announced a downsizing of news operations at its owned and operated local stations. The company’s actions included layoffs at WCBS in New York City, WBBM in Chicago, WBZ in Boston, KPIX in San Francisco, KYW in Philadelphia, KDKA in Pittsburgh, KOVR in

Sacramento, and KCWC in Denver. Should the current FCC ruling on cross-ownership stand and television stations and newspapers are allowed to merge, we can certainly expect the companies to combine news operations and further reduce the level of reporting. The result will be additional rounds of layoffs and, as a result, less reporting on issues of local concern and less diversity in local media markets.

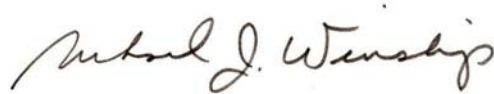
The Writers Guilds of America fully understand the financial challenges to newspapers in the Internet age. But we adamantly disagree that the solution to these challenges is to allow for the further consolidation of the nation's media outlets. We thank you for your support of S.J. Resolution 28 and look forward to working with you to insure that we prevent this unnecessary and most dangerous rule from taking effect.

Please call upon us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Patric M. Verrone
President
Writers Guild of America, West



Michael Winship
President
Writers Guild of America, East