

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 13, 2004

The Honorable Michael Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Room 8-A204A  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

We are writing about an issue of great importance to the Commission, to Congress, and to the long-term viability of American democracy.

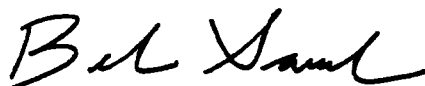
In June 2003, the FCC promulgated regulations permitting greater consolidation in the media – regulations held illegal by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. Many of us opposed those regulations because we feared that the further consolidation of broadcast media would increasingly put control of what Americans see, hear, and read in the hands of a few media conglomerates who would use that control to advance their own agenda. Unfortunately, the current reality is worse than we could have feared.

As you are no doubt aware Sinclair Broadcasting, in an unprecedented move, has announced that all 62 of its television stations will preempt their regular programming to broadcast a blatant 90-minute political attack on Senator John Kerry a few days before the election. To the best of our knowledge, never before in American history has a broadcasting company been such an active partisan participant in a Presidential campaign.

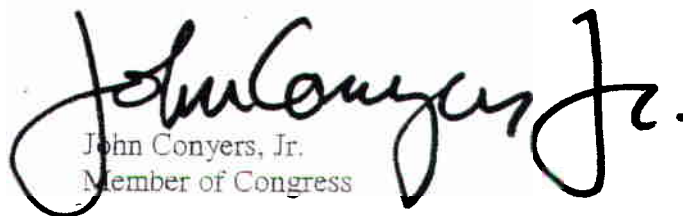
If Sinclair is allowed to go forward, it will set a precedent that endangers our very democracy. There can be little doubt that other broadcasters will follow suit and American television could become little more than the political mouthpiece for its corporate owners. If that happens, the sad truth is that American television could end up looking more like that of authoritarian countries like the former Soviet Union and China, which are widely despised for broadcasting the “party line,” rather than a forum for the free exchange of diverse political views that is so necessary to a vibrant democratic society.

We, therefore, urge you to prevent Sinclair from using its control of 62 television stations and its ability to reach some 25% of U.S. households to improperly influence the election. In addition, we ask that as you redraft your earlier media regulations -- as the Third Circuit directed, you carefully consider the actions of Sinclair. They show that increased consolidation and corporatization of the media poses a real threat to the very existence of American democracy.

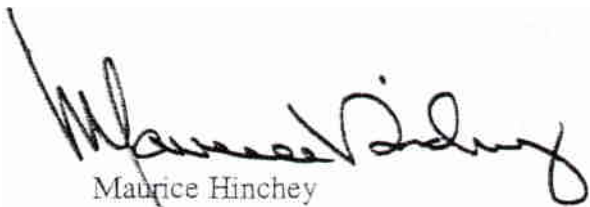
Sincerely,



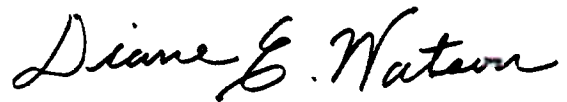
Bernard Sanders  
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress



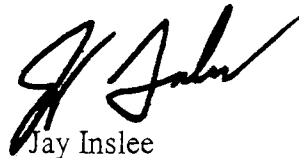
Maurice Hinchey  
Member of Congress



Diane Watson  
Member of Congress



Pete Stark  
Member of Congress



Jay Inslee  
Member of Congress



George Miller  
Member of Congress



Tom Allen  
Member of Congress



Joe Baca  
Member of Congress



Donald Payne  
Member of Congress



Lane Evans  
Member of Congress



Lynn Woolsey  
Member of Congress



Nita Lowey  
Member of Congress



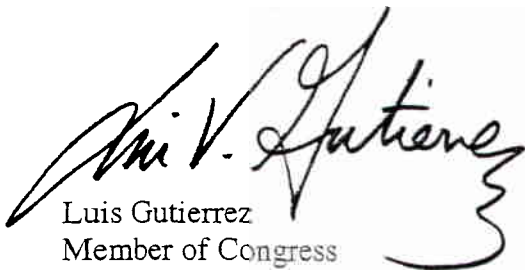
Sherrod Brown  
Member of Congress



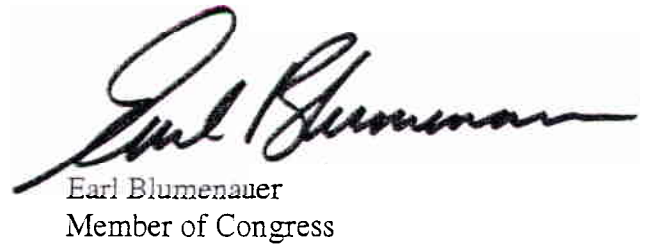
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



James Oberstar  
Member of Congress



Luis Gutierrez  
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



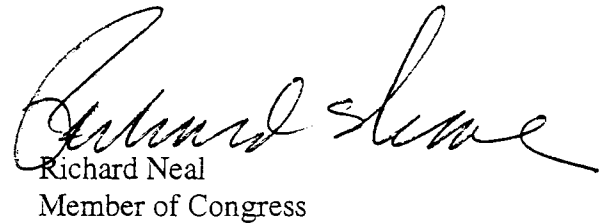
G.K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress



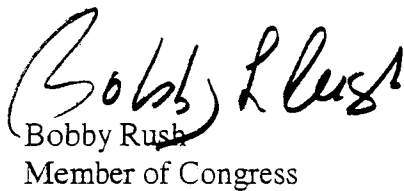
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



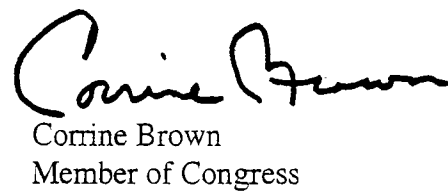
Sam Farr  
Member of Congress



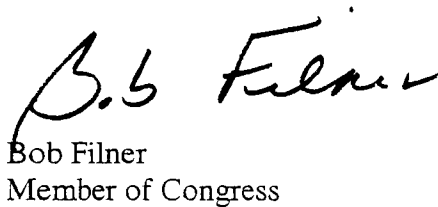
Richard Neal  
Member of Congress



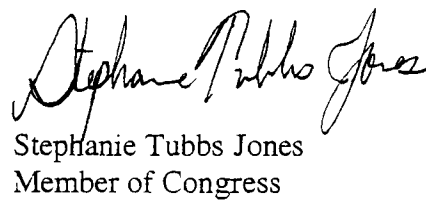
Bobby Rush  
Member of Congress



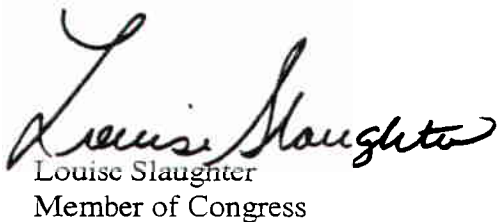
Corrine Brown  
Member of Congress



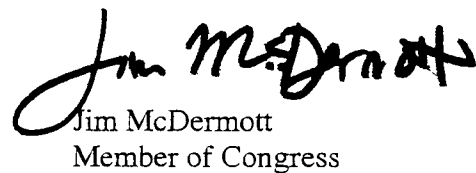
Bob Filner  
Member of Congress



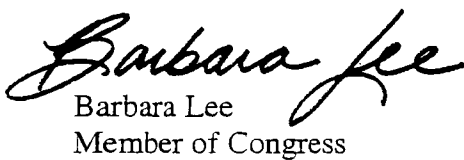
Stephanie Tubbs Jones  
Member of Congress



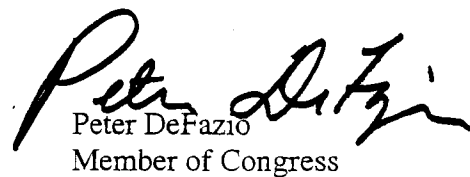
Louise Slaughter  
Member of Congress




Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Melvin Watt  
Member of Congress