

July 29, 2026

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

Re: MB Docket No. 26-131 Early License Renewal Applications of Disney's ABC-Owned and Operated Stations

Dear Chairman Carr,

The undersigned organizations respectfully urge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to renew the broadcast licenses of Disney's eight ABC-owned and operated television stations in accordance with the FCC's longstanding licensing standards.

Our organizations share a common conviction that freedom of expression and freedom of the press are vital to our democracy. The FCC's unprecedented decision to require the early renewal of the broadcast licenses of these eight stations threatens free speech and risks undermining the longstanding independence of the American press.

The FCC plays an essential role in managing the public airwaves, but that responsibility should never be weaponized to influence the media. Journalists, editors, and broadcasters must be able to report the news and speak freely, without editorial influence by the government or fear of retribution through regulatory action. It is unconstitutional for any government agency, let alone the FCC, to condition a license or permit of any type based on the viewpoint of the speaker.

Every television and radio station licensed by the FCC should be able to make independent editorial decisions without fear that mere disagreement with those in power could result in a broadcast license being revoked.

The handful of petitions to deny the license renewal claim that ABC's stations are ideological, "refusing" to cover news stories that would serve the public interest. But these petitioners would substitute their judgment for that of experienced reporters, dictating what newsrooms should cover and what viewers should see. Local stations remain focused on keeping communities informed and connected by providing critical emergency news, including major weather events and public safety warnings; however, the FCC treats these same communities as collateral damage in a political fight wholly unrelated to the interests of the American people.

Not only is this a speech-chilling move by the FCC, but the proceeding itself is almost unprecedented. Before this year, the FCC had not invoked its ability to trigger an early license

renewal for more than fifty years. This stark departure from precedent implies a coordinated, intentional attack on a network simply because the FCC does not like its programming. If broadcasters and journalists have to self-censor out of fear of the government, then that is not a free press.

We ask that the FCC reaffirm a principle that has long served both the public and the First Amendment: broadcast licenses should be administered through fair, neutral, and predictable processes, free from even the appearance of political or viewpoint-based influence. We respectfully urge the FCC to administer this proceeding in a manner that fully protects First Amendment values and preserves the longstanding independence of the nation's broadcast press.

Respectfully submitted,

Freedom of the Press Foundation

GLAAD

/http/

Journalism & Women Symposium (JAWS)

LGBT Tech

MANA, A National Latina Organization

Media Access Project

MediaJustice

Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC)

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Women's Law Center

Open Technology Institute at New America

PEN America

Public Knowledge

Reporters Without Borders (RSF)