

August 6, 2026

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

Re: Applications of TEGNA Inc. and Nexstar Media Inc. for Consent to Transfer Control, MB Docket No. 25-331 — Opposition to the Proposed Transfer and to Any Waiver or Elimination of the National Television Ownership Cap

Dear Chairman Carr and Commissioners:

[Defend the Press](#), a coalition of 25+ civic, civil rights, consumer, and media advocacy organizations convened by the National Hispanic Media Coalition, writes to urge the Commission to deny the above-captioned applications and to reject any effort to waive or eliminate the national television ownership cap in connection with this proceeding. The proposed acquisition of TEGNA Inc. by Nexstar Media Inc. would harm consumers, hollow out local journalism, and require the Commission to disregard a limit that Congress placed in statute. It cannot be reconciled with the public interest standard the Communications Act requires.

The transaction is a bad deal for the public. By Nexstar's own account, the combined company would reach roughly **54.5 percent** of the national television audience, far beyond the **39 percent** cap, and would consolidate control of 64 additional full-power stations under a single owner. Nexstar has marketed the deal to investors as a profit engine built on higher retransmission-consent fees, costs that are passed directly to families through higher monthly television bills. The applicants also seek waivers of local ownership rules in **23 markets**, further reducing competition and choice at the community level. Approving this consolidation at a moment when affordability is a defining concern for American households would put corporate synergies ahead of the consumers the Commission exists to protect.

The Commission lacks the authority to give the applicants what they seek. The 39 percent national audience-reach limit is not a mere agency rule the Commission may waive or repeal at will; it is **fixed by Congress** through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004, which bars the Commission from altering the cap. As Commissioner Gomez has correctly observed, only Congress, not the FCC, may raise or eliminate it. Granting a waiver that pushes a single owner to 54.5 percent reach, or using this docket as a vehicle to erase the cap outright, would substitute the judgment of the Commission for the express will of the people's elected representatives and invite reversal on review.

The cap exists to protect localism and viewpoint diversity, and this deal threatens both. Every wave of broadcast consolidation follows the same pattern: layoffs in local newsrooms, nationally

syndicated programming displacing local reporting, and a narrowing of the perspectives available to the public. A democracy depends on diverse, independent, locally accountable sources of news, not a homogenized national feed directed from corporate headquarters. Allowing one company to speak to more than half the country would erode the very diversity the Commission is charged with safeguarding.

These harms are magnified by the current climate. This consolidation would proceed amid a broader pattern of pressure on broadcasters, including public threats against major networks and their local stations over coverage the government dislikes. Concentrating control of the public airwaves in fewer hands while broadcasters face such pressure is a dangerous combination: it makes independent journalism easier to intimidate and weakens the structural safeguards that keep the press free.

For these reasons, Defend the Press respectfully urges the Commission to **deny the applications in MB Docket No. 25-331, reject the requested waiver of the national television ownership cap, and decline to use this proceeding as a vehicle to weaken or eliminate that cap.** The Commission's duty runs to the American people — their wallets, their local news, and their right to a free and independent press. We ask that it honor that duty here.

Respectfully submitted,

National Hispanic Media Coalition

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Center for Media and Democracy

Common Cause Georgia

#DignidadLiteraria

Hispanic Federation

Latinx in Publishing

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

MANA, A National Latina Organization

MediaJustice

National Action Network

National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP)

National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts

National Urban League

Nosotros

OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates

Open Markets Institute

Public Knowledge

Reporters without Borders

Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)