

6/09/2003 Moran Sponsors Legislation to Stop Media Consolidation

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Legislation Would Repeal Decision to Increase Media Ownership

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced that he has sponsored legislation to reverse a recent Federal Communications Commission decision to increase the national broadcast ownership cap and allow for more media mergers consolidation. H.R. 2052, the Preservation of Localism, Program Diversity and Competition in Television Broadcast Service Act of 2003, would keep in place the previous rule that no entity could own television broadcast stations that reach more than 35 percent of the national television audience.

"This 35 percent cap has helped to protect against the 'nationalization' of our local programming by maintaining a balance of local, non-network owned stations that work to serve their community's interests," Moran said. "The last thing we need is decisions about what is 'local' to be made by network executives in New York and Hollywood who have little understanding of small town values and even less concern for the people that live in our towns."

On Monday, June 2, 2003, the five-member board of the FCC voted to allow one owner to control more stations within the same market and to allow television networks to acquire more stations. Current broadcast-ownership rules limit networks to owning no more than a 35 percent share of television households. The FCC also voted to ease the restrictions on media companies owning a newspaper and television station in the same market.

This legislation would repeal the decision to raise the ownership cap. The cap would go back to the 35 percent level. Similar legislation has been introduced in the Senate.

"At the heart of our democracy is a free and diverse exchange of ideas," Moran said. "Placing the power of communication solely in the hands of a few media giants will undermine freedom of expression and limit those that are heard. Having fewer outlets for expression means that only a few voices will be heard - those of the large national programmers."

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