

7/23/2003 House Passes Bill to Stop Media Consolidation

House Passes Bill to Stop Media Consolidation

Legislation Will Reverse FCC Decision that Allows Increased Media Ownership

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced that the House of Representatives have passed a bill to reverse a recent Federal Communications Commission (FCC) decision that allows for more media mergers. An amendment, included in the funding bill for the Departments of Commerce, Justice and State, will maintain the previous regulations that prevented any one company from owning stations that reach more than 35 percent of the American public.

"The reversal of this decision is a victory for the free and diverse exchange of ideas," Moran said. "The decision by the FCC was not in the best interest of the public. Reversing this decision will allow more people to have a say in what is broadcast on our airwaves."

In June, the five-member board of the FCC voted to raise the national ownership cap to 45 percent. Previous broadcast-ownership rules limited networks to owning no more than a 35 percent share of television households. Today's legislation would prohibit the FCC from using any funds to enforce the new 45 percent level.

Earlier this year, Moran sponsored similar legislation that would have repealed the decision to raise the ownership cap, keeping it at the 35 percent level.

"Our democracy was founded upon the idea of an open forum for sharing opinions and ideas, and we should not abandon those principles," Moran said. "Keeping media at 35 percent allows more voices to be heard and has helped to protect against the 'nationalization' of our local programming. Keeping that cap in place preserves our local ideas and programming."

This legislation now moves to the Senate for consideration.

###