

I am Nancy Bedell and am a member of several organizations, which have been involved in the study of media, which GRIID has organized in our region. I thank GRIID for their effort in informing us of their research and assuring that the FCC will be aware of it through this meeting. I also concur with their conclusion that our current state of corporate news fails to inform our people adequately.

I hope we can all agree on the following: A vital, balanced and objective reporting of the news by the fourth estate, the printed media and in recent decades increasingly important radio and television news, is vital to a democratic citizenry's ability for making informed and wise decisions. As Thomas Jefferson wrote: "Enlighten the people generally and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at dawn of day."

Unfortunately the American corporate media has failed miserably in this regard. Our people cannot depend on being honestly enlightened by the corporate radio and TV news in its current form. The GRIID research of the past few years substantiates this. The Pew Center for People and the Press did a study in 2003 which you will remember, showed that over 50% of our citizens at that time believed three blatantly incorrect statements: that Saddam Hussein of Iraq was involved in the 9/11 attack and associated with Al Qaeda, that weapons of mass destruction had been found in Iraq before our invasion and that world opinion generally supported our attack of Iraq. For those of us who no longer depend entirely upon corporate TV and radio news, believing such statements was beyond our comprehension. The Administration had been able to use sound bites and misstatements to convey these false beliefs and the media had not questioned or corrected the inaccuracies. Subsequent election decisions by our electorate have been based on these falsehoods. No wonder those of us who disagree with the current trend of government spending/values cannot get the word out. The truth is continually hidden. Corporate media support the current government policy and wish to ensure it goes unchallenged. Perhaps the Katrina disaster will finally open the door to more honest reporting. The Administration has not been able to manage the news on this one!

Although it is unlikely that any licenses for our local media outlets will be withheld. I hope we can come up with some workable guidelines to improve news coverage of national events abroad, of our local elections and of minority opinion and issues. If not, our society will sink deeper into being divided between the haves and have nots, the knowledgeable using computer sources, niche publications and alternative radio as their news sources. That picture is no longer one of an informed democratic electorate aware of the complexities of all issues. I hope this license renewal process can provide a catalyst for change.