

time of the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

#### FCC POISED TO RELAX OR ELIMINATE RULES ESSENTIAL TO MAINTENANCE OF FREE PRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, in about 3 weeks, the Federal Communications Commission is poised to relax or eliminate some rules that are essential to the maintenance of a free press.

Under long-standing FCC rules, giant media companies are limited as to how much control they can exert over any one medium market or any one medium generally. That is just good, common sense in American competition. But the Bush Federal Communications Commission is about to throw those sound public interest and market soundness principles out the window, allowing some of America's biggest companies to decide what you hear, when you hear it, what you see, and, in large part, what you think.

This decision on the part of the Bush administration smacks of back-room politics at its worst. It is a story of how three commissioners are working with corporate-owned media conglomerates to expand their control over what news the public receives. Already one radio company out of Texas, and the owner happens to be a friend of the President, already owns 1,200 radio stations in this country, including a half dozen, at least a half dozen in almost every city in America. Now, these three commissioners are working with corporate-owned media conglomerates to expand their control over the airwaves; and in the process of their decision, there have been no public meetings, no time for elected officials or outside groups to comment on the proposed changes. That has been the FCC's mode of operation the last couple of years.

What is most outrageous is these ownership rules were established to protect and promote a diversity of viewpoints and to encourage economic competition.

This pending decision only fuels the public's perception that the Bush administration has a policy of giving corporations what they want, regardless of the consequences to the Nation.

The energy industry writes the administration's energy plan, companies like Enron. Chemical companies write environmental law. Chemical companies also write safe drinking water laws. Wall Street writes legislation to privatize Social Security. The drug industry writes legislation for prescription drugs. It is over and over and over. Now, the corporate-owned media companies are writing FCC policies.

The Future of Music Coalition, a group representing artists from country music to rock and roll, released a report yesterday showing staggering public opposition to the Bush rule change. This coalition had volunteers review almost 10,000 comments received from the public that the Federal Communications Commission has made public on its Web site. There are an estimated 12,000 comments the FCC received that have not yet been reviewed. But of the 10,000 that have been reviewed, 9,065 citizens unaffiliated with any corporate media, 9,065 said they were opposed to changing this rule. Only 11 individuals wrote into the FCC in support of changing the rule. That is an 824 to 1 ratio.

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The public is rightly skeptical of this back-room deal. What the FCC leadership does not understand is that they should be accountable to the very people whose opinions they are simply dismissing, Mr. Speaker.

If the FCC wants to dispute these numbers, then delay the vote, then schedule field hearings, then listen to people, then give this rule change the level of public scrutiny then that all ruling changes like that that affect the public interest deserve.

But if the FCC moves forward in relaxing ownership restrictions, this important agency loses its credibility with American consumers, and American radio and TV listeners and viewers. It violates the very principles on which it was established.

Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, yesterday a group of more than a dozen Democrats held a news conference to discuss corporate control of media. Almost always in news conferences like this media will show up. Yesterday when we held this news conference to discuss the corporate control of media, there was no corporate-owned media there. There was Congress Daily, and there was a small newspaper from Puerto Rico. No New York Times. No Washington Post. No networks. No Fox News. None of the large conglomerates that simply do not want to shine a light on some of the mischief they are creating as owners, as a few large owners of these large media conglomerates.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, on June 7 the Federal Communications Commission's vote to undermine ownership restrictions will take place. We will probably find out on that June 2 date that the Federal Communications Commission just might change its name from FCC, Federal Communications Commission, to FCC, Furthering Corporate Control. That is what this issue is about, a few companies owning large numbers of radio stations, large numbers of television stations, telling the American public only what those corporate interests want them to know.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced

that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested.

S. 709. An act to award a congressional gold medal to Prime Minister Tony Blair.

#### HONORING CHRIS NEWTON AND THE PAPPAS SCHOOL FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, today in the heart of Arizona's Fifth Congressional District in Tempe, graduation exercises at Arizona State University, commencement day, will soon commence. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of this House the endeavors of one who will be recognized and who will don the cap and gown today, even as we send congratulations to all who realize academic achievement on this day at Arizona State. His name is Chris Newton, and today as he puts on his cap and gown, he will take a significant step forward not only for himself, but also for the Pappas School for Homeless Children in Phoenix.

Mr. Speaker, Chris Newton spent the bulk of his young life as a homeless child. And while many different communities offer many different solutions, and, sadly, some here in Washington and others move to cut off the notion of schools for homeless children, this particular institution in Phoenix has done a lot to help a lot of children. But Chris Newton typifies the success.

Chris Newton was not only the first student from Pappas School for the Homeless to go to college, he now becomes the first Pappas student to graduate from college. Chris is no stranger to academic excellence, even as he dealt with the challenges of homelessness. He was the eighth grade valedictorian at Pappas School. He continued his education at Camelback High School and then stepped onto the campus at Tempe.

While debate rages among theoreticians and bureaucrats here in Washington as to the relevance of maintaining, or the alleged stigma of homeless children congregating and gathering together for education, dealing with those challenging needs, Chris offers an affirmation for what has worked for him and others in Arizona. He is quoted in the Arizona Republic in an article that chronicles the challenges he has confronted and the success he has reached: "School is always there. You can always count on it. That is 8 hours a day. Your worries are gone. You think about what you are going to do in class, when recess is, things you will do with friends after school."

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the Pappas School for Homeless Children in Arizona is literally an oasis of stability on the desert for these challenged students. It was reaffirmed in the life of