

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 159—EX-
PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE
SENATE THAT THE JUNE 2, 2003,
RULING OF THE FEDERAL COM-
MUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WEAKENING THE NATION'S
MEDIA OWNERSHIP RULES IS
NOT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST
AND SHOULD BE RESCINDED

Mr. PRYOR (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. EDWARDS, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. GRAHAM of Florida, Mr. REED, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. CARPER, and Mrs. MURRAY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. RES. 159

Whereas the Federal Communications Commission moved with unreasonable haste in considering the issue of media concentration and did not previously disclose the proposed ownership rule the Commission implemented in its June 2, 2003, ruling on media ownership rules;

Whereas the Commission did not provide an opportunity for the public to review, debate, and comment on the proposed changes prior to the ruling;

Whereas it would have been appropriate for the Commission to include such public review, debate, and comment on the specific provisions of its proposal prior to issuing a ruling with such broad implications;

Whereas there is no indication that the Commission has adequately addressed the impact of the proposed ownership rule changes on industry market share and consumer prices;

Whereas greater media concentration could threaten the diversity of and extent of local content in broadcast programming and news, and has the potential to inhibit or remove local control over such programming;

Whereas, despite the rapid growth of vital Spanish-language media outlets in the past several years, there is no indication that the Commission considered treating Spanish-language media separately for purposes of its broadcast media ownership restrictions, thereby failing to extend to Spanish speakers the same protections afforded members of the English-speaking broadcast community; and

Whereas it is in the public interest to maintain local control and promote diversity in television programming, which the previous ownership rules had been designed to ensure: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the June 2, 2003, ruling of the Federal Communications Commission weakening the Nation's media ownership rules is not in the public interest and should be rescinded.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, lying on the desk before us is a resolution relating to the Federal Communications Commission's June 2, 2003, ruling weakening the Nation's media ownership rules. I say very emphatically that those rules are not in the public interest and should be rescinded. I have laid that on the desk for my colleagues. I encourage all Members to get a copy of that and read it. I respectfully request that if anyone wants to be a cosponsor, I would love to have them cosponsor that today.

As we all know, 2 days ago, the Federal Communications Commission by a vote of 3 to 2 rolled back longstanding rules governing media ownership. This ruling eases the ban on cross-ownership of newspapers, television stations, and radio stations, and allows media corporations to own more outlets locally and nationwide.

The new rules have the potential of placing significant control over what the public sees and hears and reads in the hands of a small number of media conglomerates. Ultimately, having a few entities control a vast percentage of the American media market will stifle the diversity of ideas, viewpoints, and opinions.

It reminds me a little bit of Henry Ford who at one point told his customers that could order any color they wanted as long as it was black. I feel the same way—that we may be getting to that point with regard to our media; that we can see and read and hear anything we want as long as it comes through them.

The diversity of viewpoints is critical to our democracy. It is one of the foundations of American society and the American system of government. One thing we believe very strongly in America is the marketplace of ideas—a free and open and robust marketplace of ideas where people can exchange ideas and concepts freely and openly and not have that go through a national corporate conglomeration.

I am very confident that this proposed rule change sets the stage for homegenization—not diversification but homogenization. That is not a good thing for this country. It is not a good thing for our system.

Supporters of the FCC ruling say that the large media mergers do not stifle diversity. What they say is you can turn on cable right now and you get dozens—maybe hundreds—of channels in some systems, or you can turn on a radio station. But let me say this. Is it really diversity when the ideologies, the principles, and the viewpoints are being presented through the myopic lens of a singular, cookie-cutter point of view? I am concerned that is where we are getting to today with this ruling that will rush us headlong into this calamity.

I think if the majority of Americans look at this issue they would understand that it does; that this ruling does not promote diversity but, in fact, limits it.

There is a broad array of special interest groups, of consumer advocates, of civil rights and religious groups, small business, whatever—a broad array of interests—that are opposed. They are opposed to this ruling for very sound reasons. That is why I rise today to offer this resolution.

I also wish to take this moment to publicly support the efforts of Senator TED STEVENS and Senator FRITZ HOLLINGS because they are taking the lead in trying to codify the 35-percent ownership cap. I am not only supportive of

their legislation but I am also a cosponsor.

This resolution is in no way competition to that but, in my view, this resolution is a logical extension of their efforts. It is unfortunate that we have to come here today to consider resolutions and legislation on this issue. The frustrations and the hostility out there in the public domain about this ruling and about corporate ownership of media outlets has been exacerbated by the FCC's inability to communicate to the public in rational terms and explain why this proposal is a good idea.

In spite of 2 years of study, we need more time to study this. So far, the advocates of this position have made a very unconvincing case.

One thing we need to understand in this country is that there is a fundamental difference in owning and operating a newspaper and in owning and operating regular television stations. Anyone today, if they chose to, could start a newspaper. All you really need in today's world is the ability to do some desk-top publishing and get out there and have a way to distribute your publication. But to have a radio station or a television station requires a license from the Government. That license is a sacred trust. It is a trust that they are going to have broadcasts in the community interest. They are going to have the programming that the community wants. They are going to play a vital role in our system when it comes to news and information and getting information out to the public which is important for them to have.

One example of the FCC's shortcoming on this issue is the fact that the FCC has made no case for examining the Spanish language media as a separate market. I think everybody in this room understands it is a separate market. But because they have not seen it as a separate market, they look at mergers and acquisitions and their analysis is skewed in favor of the merger and the acquisition.

Thank you, Mr. President and other Members of the Senate, for the indulgence and this time.

I would like to remind everyone that this is out here for everyone to look at. I would very much appreciate as many cosponsors as we could have. I think it is important that the Senate send a very clear message on this topic.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 48—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF "NATIONAL EPILEPSY AWARENESS MONTH" AND URGING FUNDING FOR EPILEPSY RESEARCH AND SERVICE PROGRAMS

Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAIG, Ms. LANDRIEU, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. DEWINE) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. CON. RES. 48

Whereas epilepsy is a neurological condition that causes seizures and affects 2,300,000 people in the United States;

Whereas a seizure is a disturbance in the electrical activity of the brain, and 1 in every 12 Americans will suffer at least 1 seizure;

Whereas 180,000 new cases of seizures and epilepsy are diagnosed each year, and 3 percent of Americans will develop epilepsy by the time they are 75;

Whereas 41 percent of people who currently have epilepsy experience persistent seizures despite the treatment they are receiving;

Whereas a survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention demonstrated that the hardships imposed by epilepsy are comparable to those imposed by cancer, diabetes, and arthritis;

Whereas epilepsy in older children and adults remains a formidable barrier to leading a normal life by affecting education, employment, marriage, childbearing, and personal fulfillment;

Whereas uncontrollable seizures in a child can create multiple problems affecting the child's development, education, socialization, and daily life activities;

Whereas the social stigma surrounding epilepsy continues to fuel discrimination, and isolates people who suffer from seizure disorders from mainstream life;

Whereas in spite of these formidable obstacles, people with epilepsy can live healthy and productive lives and make significant contributions to society;

Whereas November is an appropriate month to designate as "National Epilepsy Awareness Month";

Whereas the designation of a "National Epilepsy Awareness Month" would help to focus attention on, and increase understanding of, epilepsy and those people who suffer from it: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of a "National Epilepsy Awareness Month";

(2) requests the President to issue a proclamation declaring an annual "National Epilepsy Awareness Month";

(3) calls upon the American people to observe "National Epilepsy Awareness Month" with appropriate programs and activities;

(4) urges an increase in funding for epilepsy research programs at the National Institutes of Health and at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and

(5) urges that initial funding be provided to the Health Resources and Services Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services to create demonstration projects to serve people with epilepsy who may lack access to adequate medical care for the treatment of such disease.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 49—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF JUNE 9, 2003, AS NATIONAL OCEANS WEEK AND URGING THE PRESIDENT TO ISSUE A PROCLAMATION CALLING UPON THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES TO OBSERVE THIS WEEK WITH APPROPRIATE RECOGNITION, PROGRAMS, CEREMONIES, AND ACTIVITIES TO FURTHER OCEAN LITERACY, EDUCATION, AND EXPLORATION

Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. DODD, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CARPER, Mr.

INOUE, Mr. BREAUX, Mr. SUNUNU, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. REED, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CLINTON, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. CON. RES. 49

Whereas 95 percent of the deep ocean is unexplored and unknown, and the ocean is truly the last frontier on Earth for science and civilization;

Whereas the ocean comprises nearly three quarters of the Earth's surface and sustains 80 percent of all life on Earth, including a large part of the Earth's biodiversity;

Whereas the oceans play a critical role in the global water cycle, carbon cycle and in regulating climate; and over 90 percent of the oxygen in the Earth's atmosphere, essential to life on Earth, comes from the world's oceans and rivers;

Whereas the oceans are an important source of food, provide a wealth of other natural products, and the oceans and sea floor contain vast energy and mineral resources that are critical to the economy of the United States and the world;

Whereas the United States has more than 95,000 miles of coastline and more than 50 percent of the population of the United States lives within 50 miles of the ocean or the Great Lakes;

Whereas coastal areas are regions of remarkably high biological productivity, are of considerable importance for a variety of recreational and commercial activities, and provide a vital means of transportation;

Whereas ocean resources are limited and susceptible to change as a direct and indirect result of human activities, and such changes can impact the ability of the ocean to provide the benefits upon which the Nation depends;

Whereas the rich biodiversity of marine organisms provides society with an essential biomedical resource, a promising source of novel compounds with therapeutic potential, and a potentially important contribution to the national economy;

Whereas there exists significant promise for the development of new ocean technologies for stewardship of ocean resources that will contribute to the economy through business and manufacturing innovations and the creation of new jobs;

Whereas the President's Panel on Ocean Exploration recommended to the White House and to the Congress in its Year 2000 final report, "Discovering Earth's Final Frontier: A U.S. Strategy for Ocean Exploration," a 10-year program to launch the first national plan for ocean exploration;

Whereas the Oceans Act of 2000 passed by the United States Congress authorized the establishment of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and directed it to conduct a comprehensive review of present and future ocean programs and activities and provide comprehensive ocean policy recommendations to the Congress and the President by 2003; and

Whereas our oceans are vital to our national security and our national economy, and with America's greatest era of ocean exploration and discovery still ahead: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring) That it is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the ocean is of paramount importance to the economic future, environmental quality, and national security of the United States;

(2) the United States has a responsibility to exercise and promote comprehensive stew-

ardship and understanding of the ocean and the living marine resources it contains; and

(3) the week of June 9, 2003, be designated as National Oceans Week and urges the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate recognition, programs, ceremonies, and activities to further ocean literacy, education, and exploration.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I am pleased to rise today to submit a Senate Concurrent Resolution designating the week of June 9, 2003 as National Oceans Week.

As a Nation with more than 95,000 miles of coastline, the United States is highly dependent on the resources and services of the oceans that affect many important aspects of our lives, often in ways we do not fully realize. As Chair of the Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Oceans, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, I believe it is important for us to recognize the many benefits that the oceans provide, and I am happy that 19 other Senators are joining me in sponsoring this Senate Concurrent Resolution that formally recognizes the ocean's many benefits.

Our oceans are capable of significant biological productivity that produces food, which provides nourishment for citizens across the globe and sustains fishery dependent communities. Oceans regulate global climate and the cycling of oxygen, carbon, and water in our atmosphere, and oceans provide a vital means of transporting goods between countries and thereby support the global economy. In addition to these biological, physical, and economic benefits, the oceans remain a largely unexplored domain that can enrich our lives in countless other ways. For all these reasons and more, I believe it is important to recognize the many ways we rely upon the oceans.

The capacity of the oceans to supply these resources and services, however, is finite. Much of our nation's attention is currently focused on several recent reports that point to the destructive nature of foreign overfishing, the negative impacts of harmful algal blooms and oil spills, and the coastal habitat loss associated with uncoordinated development activities. Collectively, these and other human impacts can significantly affect how oceans function. We need to be constantly looking for ways to minimize these impacts and help sustain the oceans' productive capacity, which in turn will provide us with the resources that enhance the quality of our lives.

Given the extent to which the United States depends on and uses the oceans, it is incumbent upon us to take a leadership role in ocean science and conservation. We must recognize this responsibility and continue to seek ways to promote comprehensive stewardship and understanding of the ocean and the resources it contains. For this and other reasons, I co-sponsored Senator HOLLINGS' legislation establishing the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy in 2000, and I look forward to reviewing its recommendations later this year.