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THE NEWSPAPER GUILD, COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

August 7, 2014

Ms. Charlotte Savercool, Legislative Clerk
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear: Honorable Greg Walden, Chairman
Honorable Anna Eshoo, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology,

In response to questions of my testimony before the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology on June 11, 2014 at the hearing entitled "Media Ownership in the 21st Century".

Question 1 – The Honorable Greg Walden – Your testimony indicated that common ownership of the Youngstown Vindicator newspaper and two television stations has resulted in fewer newsroom jobs and less news in the market. Ms. Eshoo and I have received a letter from the general managers of the newspaper and television station that indicates the contrary. Would you like to add to and clarify your testimony on this point?

Concerning joint ownership of two television stations and the Youngstown Vindicator – the management also reached out to me to say that there is no coordination at all between the properties. It's clear that stories are sometimes used in the newspaper from the television properties, but I have no reason to question management's assertion that they don't coordinate. The number of newsroom jobs at the paper has declined but I can't make a causal connection. I did tell the management that I would clarify this for anyone who inquired. What is clear is that their competitor, LIN Media, does use duplicated material across their stations in Youngstown.

Question 2 – The Honorable Anna Eshoo – In your testimony, you stated that JSA's and SSA's have substantially reduced original news coverage in cities across the country including Youngstown, Ohio and Honolulu, Hawaii. These anecdotal examples coupled with the fact that 25 percent of the nation's 952 local news stations do not produce their newscasts themselves point to a real problem. What more can the FCC do to incent broadcasters to invest in local news and investigative journalism?

Concerning the question of what incentives could be created to get more television statements to create original news – this is a difficult question because the current market creates great incentives not to. I too, prefer constructive approaches. I suppose there could be tax credits for journalists hired to help offset the cost of creating newsrooms. But unfortunately I also believe the FCC must literally act to stop this practice. Stations that don't serve the public interest should be put up for sale. This would be the best approach because it could help to improve diversity of ownership, which is at an all time low.

Sincerely,

Bernard J. Lunzer
President
The Newspaper Guild-CWA

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