



Getting Involved

At the dawn of the digital television age, federal policymakers have a fresh opportunity to create meaningful public interest obligations for broadcasters. To date, broadcasters have argued that self-regulation and voluntary actions would be more than sufficient for them to meet these goals – but time has shown it's not enough.

We deserve to know how broadcasters will serve our day-to-day television needs and to know as much about the TV that comes into our living rooms as the food that comes into our kitchens.

To achieve these goals, parents, voters, community leaders, activists, and concerned citizens need to pick

up the television policy remote. It takes writing letters, picking up the phone, and letting policymakers know that you want reality-based public interest obligations that can help make a difference in your lives. Public engagement in the debates can change the tune coming from policymakers in Washington.

Twelve Ways to Get Involved

1. Become an informed advocate by reading and signing onto the Bill of Citizens' Media Rights (www.citizensmediarights.org).
2. Get involved through leading organizations that enable you to learn more about the issues and take action as appropriate: • Public Interest, Public Airwaves Coalition (www.pipac.info) • Common Cause (www.commoncause.org) • Free Press (www.freepress.net) • HearUsNow.org (www.hearusnow.org)
3. Keep up to date on emerging policy developments by subscribing to Benton Foundation Communications-related Headlines, a free online daily news summary.
4. Tell the FCC you want them to set concrete and measurable minimum public interest standards for broadcasters.
5. Find out how your broadcasters are serving your children; make sure they know you care – and let the FCC know if they don't.
6. Take advantage of the V-Chip, program listings, and web sites to enrich the programming your children are viewing.
7. Tell your local broadcasters you want more coverage of local, civic, and electoral affairs.
8. Tell your local broadcasters you want more diverse, locally produced, and independent programming.
9. Tell the FCC you want it to protect media diversity as it revises media ownership rules.
10. Tell your local broadcasters you want to know how they are meeting your needs.
11. Tell the FCC you want broadcasters to disclose the ways they comply with their public interest obligations, ascertain their community's needs, and create programming that serves those needs.
12. Contact the resources below and on the next page to stay informed and get the tools you need for taking action in your community.

Resources on Tap

Alliance for Better Campaigns www.bettercampaigns.org

The Alliance is a public interest group that seeks to improve elections by promoting campaigns in which the most useful information reaches the greatest number of citizens in the most engaging ways. It believes that broadcasters can and must use the publicly owned airwaves to revitalize our democracy. The Alliance is now part of the Campaign Legal Center.

Alliance for Community Media www.alliancecm.org

Representing over 1,000 Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) access organizations and community media centers throughout the country, ACM is committed to assuring everyone's access to electronic media. The Alliance advances this goal through public education, a progressive legislative and regulatory agenda, coalition building, and grassroots organizing.

Benton Foundation www.benton.org

The mission of the Benton Foundation is to articulate a public interest vision for the digital age and to demonstrate the value of communications for solving social problems. It offers Communications-related Headlines, a free daily online news summary service that covers industry developments, policy debates, and other communications-related news events.

Campaign Legal Center www.campaignlegalcenter.org

The Campaign Legal Center is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works in the areas of campaign finance, communications, and government ethics.

Center for Creative Voices in Media www.creativevoices.us/

The Center for Creative Voices in Media is

dedicated to preserving in America's media the original, independent, and diverse creative voices that enrich our nation's culture and safeguard its democracy.

Center for Digital Democracy www.democraticmedia.org

The Center for Digital Democracy is committed to preserving the openness and diversity of the Internet in the broadband era, and to realizing the full potential of digital communications through the development and encouragement of noncommercial, public interest programming.

Center for International Media Action www.mediaactioncenter.org

CIMA is a nonprofit organization created to strengthen connections among grassroots organizers, public interest advocates, activists, and researchers focused on media policy and social justice. It offers a directory of hundreds of organizations that took action to stop FCC deregulation of media ownership.

Center for Public Integrity www.publicintegrity.org

The Center for Public Integrity is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that conducts investigative research and reporting on public policy issues in the United States and around the world.

Chicago Media Action www.chicagomediaaction.org

CMA is an activist group dedicated to analyzing and broadening Chicago's mainstream media and to building Chicago's independent media.

Children Now www.childrennow.org

Children Now is an independent, nonpartisan research and action organization dedicated to assuring that children grow up in economically secure families, where parents can go to work confident that their children are supported by quality health coverage,

a positive media environment, a good early education, and safe, enriching activities to do after school.

Common Cause www.commoncause.org

Common Cause is a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization founded as a vehicle for citizens to make their voices heard in the political process, to hold their elected leaders accountable to the public interest, and to ensure that the media meets its obligations to serve the public. Its Media and Democracy Program is working to ensure that the media meets its obligations to serve the public by promoting diversity, accessibility, and accountability among media corporations and the government agencies that regulate the media.

Consumer Federation of America www.consumerfed.org

CFA provides consumers a voice in decisions that affect their lives, including work on pro-consumer policy issues and disseminating information on consumer issues to the public and the media, as well as to policymakers and other public interest advocates.

Consumers Union www.consumersunion.org

CU, publisher of Consumer Reports, is an independent, nonprofit testing and information organization serving only consumers. CU is a comprehensive source for unbiased advice about products and services, personal finance, health and nutrition, and other consumer concerns. CU has produced a new web site, HearUsNow.org, to inform and activate consumers on media, communications, and technology issues.

Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting www.fair.org

FAIR is a national media watch group working to invigorate the First Amendment by advocating for greater diversity in the press and by scrutinizing media practices that

marginalize public interest, minority, and dissenting viewpoints.

Federal Communications Commission
www.fcc.gov

The FCC is an independent United States government agency, directly responsible to Congress. The FCC is charged with regulating interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable. The FCC's jurisdiction covers the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. possessions.

Free Press
www.freepress.net

Free Press is a national nonpartisan organization working to increase informed public participation in crucial media policy debates, and to generate policies that will produce a more competitive and public interest-oriented media system with a strong nonprofit and noncommercial sector. Its site has a host of information and activist tools.

HearUsNow.org
www.hearushnow.org

A project of Consumers Union, HearUsNow.org empowers consumers to fight for better and more affordable telephone, cable and Internet services or equipment by focusing on major media, technology and communications issues and emphasizing local stories. The site helps explain these increasingly complex issues and the connections between the issues, underscores what's at stake, and offers ways to make improvements.

Institute for Public Representation at Georgetown University
www.law.georgetown.edu/clinics/ipr

IPR is a public interest law firm and clinical education program. IPR attorneys act as counsel for groups and individuals who are unable to obtain effective legal representation on matters that have a significant impact on issues of broad public importance including communications law, environmental law, civil rights, and general public interest matters. They have worked with Media Access Project to prevent the FCC's media ownership rules from being enforced.

Kaiser Family Foundation
www.kff.org

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation is a nonprofit, private operating foundation focusing on the major health care issues facing the nation. It acts as an independent voice and source of facts and analysis for policymakers, the media, the health care community, and the general public.

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
www.civilrights.org

LCCR, a civil rights coalition of over 180 national organizations, has coordinated the national legislative campaign on behalf of every major civil rights law since 1957. Among its priorities is advancing media diversity.

Media Access Project
www.mediaaccess.org

MAP is a thirty-year-old nonprofit public interest telecommunications law firm that promotes the public's First Amendment right to hear and be heard on the electronic media of today and tomorrow. MAP's attorneys successfully asked the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit to throw out the FCC's media ownership rules on behalf of its client, the Philadelphia-based Prometheus Radio Project.

Media Alliance
www.media-alliance.org

Media Alliance is a 28-year-old media resource and advocacy center for media workers, nonprofit organizations, and social justice activists. Their mission is excellence, ethics, diversity, and accountability in all aspects of the media in the interests of peace, justice, and social responsibility.

MediaChannel
www.mediachannel.org

MediaChannel.org is a nonprofit, public interest web site dedicated to global media issues. MediaChannel offers news, reports, and commentary from an international network of media issues organizations and publications, as well as original features from contributors and staff.

Media Tank
www.mediatank.org

Media Tank promotes media literacy, policy education, and a vibrant local media culture through community workshops, lectures, screenings, forums, national organizing and speaking engagements, and resource materials.

Minority Media and Telecommunications Council
www.mmtconline.org

MMTTC is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving equal opportunity and civil rights in the mass media and telecommunications industries.

National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture
www.namac.org

NAMAC is a national association of nonprofit organizations and individuals committed to furthering the media arts: film, video, audio, and digital.

National Association of Broadcasters
www.nab.org

The NAB is a trade association that promotes and protects local broadcast radio and television stations' interests in Washington and around the world. NAB is the broadcaster's voice before Congress, federal agencies, and the courts.

National Institute on Media and the Family
www.mediafamily.org

The National Institute on Media and the Family examines the impact of electronic

media on families and works to help parents and communities watch what kids watch.

New America Foundation
www.newamerica.net

The New America Foundation is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit public policy institute that brings promising new voices and new ideas to the fore of the nation's public discourse through research, writing, and conferences.

Newspaper Guild/Communications Workers of America (CWA)
www.newsguild.org

The Guild/CWA is primarily a media union whose 34,000 members are diverse in their occupations, but who share the view that the best working conditions are achieved by people who have a say in their workplace, including working conditions, standards of journalism, and ethics of the industry.

Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ
www.ucc.org/ocinc

As an outgrowth of the United Church of Christ's historic commitment to civil rights, OC, Inc. was incorporated in 1959 to advocate on behalf of those who had been historically excluded from the media, especially people of color and women.

Parents Television Council
www.parentstv.org

The Parents Television Council is a national grassroots organization that works to ensure that children are not constantly assaulted by sex, violence, and profanity on television and in other media.

Prometheus Radio Project
www.prometheusradio.org

The Prometheus Radio Project is not-for-profit association dedicated to the democratization of the airwaves through the proliferation of non-commercial, community based, micropower radio stations.

Public Interest, Public Airwaves Coalition
www.pipac.info

The PIPA Coalition is an alliance of public policy groups, media activists, and grassroots organizers that are active in the ongoing fight against media consolidation and deregulation. It offers a grassroots toolkit for a nationwide campaign to encourage local citizens to hold their communities' broadcasters to a higher standard of public service, particularly when it comes to election coverage.

Reclaim the Media
www.reclaimthedia.org

Reclaim the Media is a coalition of independent journalists, media activists, and community organizers in the Pacific Northwest, promoting press freedom and community media access as prerequisites for a functioning democracy.