

REMARKS OF JOE LINSON SAN ANTONIO LOCALISM HEARING

The late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in a sermon said, "Take our attitude toward advertisement. We are so easily led to purchase a product because a television or radio advertisement pronounces it better than any other. Advertisers have long since learned that most people are soft-minded, and they capitalize on this susceptibility with skillful and effective slogans. This undue gullibility is also seen in the tendency of many readers to accept the printed word of the press as final truth. Few people realize that even our authentic channels of information—the press, the platform, and in many instances the pulpit—do not give us objective and unbiased truth."

Every bit of information comes to us with a point of view. Therefore, I feel that it is imperative for media outlets to engage the total community as much as humanly possible. In San Antonio, for the most part, the print and electronic media have been quite responsible. That is not to say that improvements can't be made. None of us have reached perfection yet. Continuous improvement in reporting the news is the challenge of the times.

I am delighted that the FCC has chosen San Antonio as one of the cities for these broadcast localism hearings. I am in support of deregulation in as many instances as possible. After all, this is the essence of the free enterprise system, which has served this great country well. I do not necessarily believe that big is bad. I am of the opinion that the less government involvement in the private sector, the better off the overall economy. I feel that the market will dictate, if left alone.

I encourage that the FCC is moving in this direction. However, I do understand the concerns that some have folks are expressing about consolidation. One way to assuage those concerns is to require media companies to set up community advisory boards in the local markets. This would allow individuals from all sectors of the community to provide input to the message.

I have personally been involved as a community representative of the now defunct, San Antonio Light newspaper and provided valuable insight into the local African American community. The San Antonio Express News has a community advisory board and relies heavily on the input of the community leaders. I would be in favor of a more robust approach driven by the FCC to continue to encourage this process.

Also, I would point out to you that the local cable company—Time Warner has a program of community access. This program allows individuals and groups to produce their own programs and thus, shape their own message. This is really a good thing in this community. I think the concept of low frequency FM stations can be a huge asset in this regard, as well.

There are groups in town, such as, the NAACP, Neighborhood First Alliance, The 100 Black Men, The Alamo City Chamber of Commerce and others who would benefit by having access to their own "community FM station. For the most part, community groups have access to religious programming in the African American community, but not much more. Low frequency FM can be a tremendous resource to the community.

I am confident that our local media will accept a good faith outreach program designed to provide wider access to the power of the printed and electronic message. Along those lines, I would strongly encourage internships and national searches to find staff people who reflect the demographics of a particular community.

I would be remiss to accuse the local media of bias in hiring when I don't have the facts on who is actually applying for the jobs. I do know that talk radio is very popular here and around the country, and I rarely hear an African American perspective. There is a real opportunity for input here.

I could go on and on with this message, however, I would much rather spend the rest of my time dealing with any questions related to the local market. I would close by thanking Chairman Michael Powell and his distinguished team of professionals for their leadership in this area. Joe Earl Linson can be contacted at: 210-643-2202 or email Linson at: jel7179@aol.com