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Received & Inspected
DEC 15 2014
FCC Mail Room

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554
Re: Renewal numbers:
KFVE: BRCDT - 20140930AFX
KHNL: BRCDT - 20141001CEM
KGMB: BRCDT - 20141001CDU

Dear Madame Secretary,

I am writing from my perspective as a former political reporter in Hawai'i and my ongoing work as an independent writer and historian. When I began working as political bureau chief for the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* in 1968, we had two major independent newspapers and three independent television stations, all locally owned and competing with one another. Each was fully staffed and the competition for both breaking news and enterprise journalism was intense. The *Star Bulletin* had a five-person bureau at the State Capitol during the legislative session, and the television stations likewise maintained bureau operations with fulltime and backup "beat" reporters who were knowledgeable and aggressive. One went on to be a State Senator and another a longtime State Represenative. The desk and anchor people at the stations were also vastly knowledgeable than today.

Beginning in 1971, with the arrival of Gannett Corporation, chain ownership and media consolidation began to weaken our previously robust practice of journalism. Without deep attachment to the complex Hawai'i community, journalism became ever more a commodity. The latest blow is the news consolidation of the three television stations I am addressing in this letter, KFVE, KHNL and KGMB. With your agency's approval, these three stations produce and broadcast only one news program

In an earlier day, KGMB alone was the leading television news broadcaster and kept up a strong pace of political news, commentary, and the periodic production of long-form documentaries as well. A noted journalist and author, Scott C.S. Stone, oversaw documentary production. News director Bob Sevey was regarded as the dean of early-day television broadcast. The station's owner/editorialist, Cec Heftel, was elected a U.S. Representative.

With consolidation, political stories are "rip and read." In an occasional on-location story, a passably knowledgeable reporter may emerge, but that same reporter's work is diluted by his or her handling numerous other assignments, most predictably traffic and crime-blotter stories.

If you were to do a content analysis, you would find that the single biggest time-fillers on KGMB/KHNL/KFVE are weather stories and police-blotter reports. I find it astonishing there are three long weather stories within a single news show, when weather used to be a 15- to 30-second afterword.

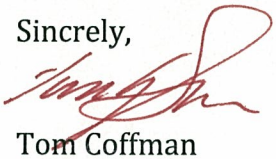
Competition is further limited by the combined three stations engaging the only remaining daily newspaper, the Star Advertiser, as its "media partner." This translates into both entities sharing the same material and taking turns parceling it out as (please pause to imagine this) "breaking news."

Public life has suffered concomitantly. The most egregious example is that, during this period, Hawai'i has gone from having the highest to the lowest voter turnout of any State.

Contrary to the images of paradise, Hawai'i faces serious challenges. The size and demands of government are straining our economic base, which translates to rapid or excessive development as a revenue-generator. We are besieged by environmental threats such as warming, rising seas, shoreline erosion and the degradations resulting from invasions of alien species. A large number of Native Hawaiians are increasingly disaffected with American life and are of a mind to seek a return to the kingdom of Hawai'i.

Such issues require a renewed vigor in journalism. You can help by denying the application for renewal of license in such a way as to force a return to greater competition among these three subject stations.

Sincrely,



Tom Coffman

11/22/14