

FEBRUARY 26, 2003

**SCHAKOWSKY SAYS CONGRESS
SHOULD NOT LIMIT FURTHER
CONSUMER CHOICE IN THE MEDIA**

**OPPOSES EFFORTS TO ALLOW A FEW MEDIA CONGLOMERATES TO OWN EVEN MORE
MEDIA OUTLETS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today said she opposes the elimination and weakening of Federal Communications Commission rules that would limit even further consumer choice by allowing a few media conglomerates to own more media outlets. Schakowsky is a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

"I strongly believe that we need to have more diversity in the media. Media concentration with too few independently owned media sources limits the ability for consumers to hear multiple and divergent viewpoints. It also creates enormous barriers to entry into the market," Schakowsky said.

The Federal Communications Commission is currently considering proposals to eliminate or severely weaken several important rules that prevent increased concentration. The FCC is reviewing a current rule that prohibits any one entity from owning TV stations that reach more than 35% of the U.S. television audience, and rules that prohibit any entity from owning two of the major four TV networks. Another rule under review by the FCC prohibits one entity from owning a daily newspaper and a TV or radio station in the same market is also under review.

"Greater media ownership concentration has not been demonstrated to benefit the American public. We must not allow a few media conglomerates to own more media outlets. We cannot allow information to be monopolized," Schakowsky said.

In 1996 radio was largely deregulated by Congress -- the result is greater consolidation. In 1995, Clear Channel owned 1.3% of radio stations; today it owns 20.2%. In almost half of the largest markets, the three largest corporations control 80 percent of the radio audience.

Schakowsky expressed concern that media outlets are more focused on their bottom line than that public good, and pointed to remarks by Clear Channel founder and CEO. He said in Fortune Magazine, "We're not in the business of providing news and information. We're not in the business of proving well researched music. We're simply in the business of selling our consumers products."