

RESOLUTION ON NEW FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC) RULES AND MEDIA CONCENTRATION

WHEREAS, freedom of expression and diversity of opinion are essential to democracy, and

WHEREAS, these intellectual freedom principles are the bedrock of American librarianship, and

WHEREAS, the Library Bill of Rights states: "Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues," and

WHEREAS, America's libraries are essential to the collection, preservation, and provision of local information and history to their communities, and

WHEREAS, the mandate of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is to foster diversity, localism, and competition in the U.S. broadcast system, and

WHEREAS, the FCC on June 2, 2003, voted 3-2 to change its rules on media ownership to allow a company (1) to own television stations that can reach a higher percentage of the national audience (2) to increase the number of stations it owns in a given area, and (3) to allow a company to own television stations and newspapers in the same market, and

WHEREAS, the FCC's action removes safeguards against undue concentration of media ownership, inevitably reducing the number of independent voices and decreasing the amount of locally produced and locally relevant news and programming, and

WHEREAS, concentration of media ownership and production diminishes libraries' ability to provide a wide range of views and information, and

WHEREAS, without a diversity of opinion, the ability of libraries to provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues to their communities is diminished, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association (ALA) deplores the action of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) of June 2, 2003, and voices in the strongest possible terms opposition to these changes in the media ownership rules that encourage further concentration of the media, and be it further

RESOLVED, that ALA supports Congressional legislation to void the FCC's regulatory action, including S.1046, the "Preservation of Localism, Program Diversity, and Competition in Television Broadcast Act of 2003," and supports Congressional efforts to reduce media concentration in the United States, and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to the Federal Communications Commission, to Members of both Houses of Congress, and to others as appropriate.

Adopted by the
Council of the American Library Association
Wednesday, June 25, 2003
Toronto, Canada