

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on “Broadcast Ownership in the 21st Century”
September 25, 2015**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Our conversation today offers us a great opportunity to discuss ways we can modernize our laws to better reflect a media industry that serves consumers in the innovative and dynamic 21st century. How people get their news has changed dramatically and continues to evolve on a near daily basis. But the media ownership rules in place today have failed to keep pace. Local broadcast stations and newspapers are now in direct competition with not only traditional national media outlets, but also a wide variety of nontraditional outlets as well as social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. Growing up in Southwest Michigan, you could count on one hand the source of news that was available –with the only options being local TV evening news, radio, or the morning hometown newspaper. Now, we have access to unlimited sources of real time information, 24 hours a day. But our laws are stuck in the 20th century, desperately needing an update that reflects the ever changing market.

Without relief, media companies have slowly sold off their newspaper and print operations, and it is unclear still what fate ultimately awaits many of our daily newspapers. Competition from the Internet has eroded traditional media companies' market share and ad revenues – a point made even clearer as a result of the Great Recession. Modern laws might have allowed broadcasters and newspapers to better weather the rise of the Internet or the economic impact of the recession, but that relief has not been forthcoming.

We are all committed to fostering competition, localism, and diversity of perspectives in a healthy and vibrant media industry. The parties here may not agree how best to achieve those goals, but we have the obligation to push forward and find agreement on something better because the status quo is unacceptable.

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