

And Paul Craig Roberts, who is a nationally syndicated columnist, one of our most respected columnists and was a former assistant Secretary of the Treasury under President Reagan, a very conservative Republican, he wrote a few days ago, he said in the last 27 months: "The U.S. economy has lost 2.6 million private sector jobs. Much of this loss is from the fall in profits and subsequent downsizing after the high-tech bust. Some lost jobs, however, are from a new development: America's export of high-wage jobs to low-wage countries.

"The collapse of the Soviet Union, China's 'capitalist road,' and privatizations in formerly socialist economies made it reasonably safe for U.S. firms to locate capital and technology abroad to employ foreign labor to produce for the U.S. market. The main incentive to take production offshore is the availability of labor at wages far below the U.S. rate.

"Foreign labor can be hired at a fraction of U.S. cost, because the standard of living is much lower in China, India, and other Asian countries. These countries have a labor supply that is large relative to demand, making it possible to employ people at wages considerably less than the value of their contribution to output."

And it goes on in this column, Madam Speaker, and says: "Thus the very process that helps U.S. firms become more profitable and price competitive worsens the U.S. trade deficit, lowers U.S. employment and GDP growth and puts pressure on the value of the dollar.

"The growing ability of U.S. employers to substitute cheaper foreign labor for U.S. labor is putting pressure on U.S. wages and salaries. On April 26 The New York Times reported that real earnings of those in the top 10 percent fell 1.4 percent over the last year. The real weekly pay for the median worker fell 1.5 percent.

"Another indication of the pressure on U.S. employment is the growing number of discouraged job seekers who have dropped out of the labor force. The 6 percent unemployment rate does not include those too discouraged to seek jobs."

If we do not start putting American workers first once again, Madam Speaker, we are going to have a real problem in this country.

A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY MUST RELY ON DIVERSITY OF OPINION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HINCHEY. Madam Speaker, I would like this evening once again to bring to the attention of the Members of the House of Representatives an action which will be taken by the Federal Communications Commission on June 2, now just a little more than 2 weeks away. This is a very critical action,

and it will be a controversial one. It will be controversial within the Federal Communications Commission itself in that the vote is likely to be three to two. The three Republican members of the Communications Commission will vote for this measure, and the two Democrats will vote against it. This measure will continue a program that was advanced initially in the 1980's which is bringing about the increasing consolidation of the American Communications System into the hands of fewer and fewer people.

For example, as a result of actions taken during the Reagan administration and subsequent actions taken, we now have a situation in the United States where 80 percent of the radio audience is listening to stations that are owned by just several companies. One company owns radio stations, 1,220 of them, all across America. This situation is critical because it is antithetical to a democratic society.

When the Federal Communications Commission was established back in the 1930's, it was established in order to ensure that there would be a broad diversity of opinion expressed on radio, which was at that time of course the principal electronic means of communication. This position taken by the FCC and by the Congress which established it was informed by events that took place in Europe in the 1930's. Fascist governments in Germany, in Spain, and Italy had come to power by increasingly consolidating the means of communication; and once they were in power, they completed that consolidation, and it was through that consolidation that they remained in power in those countries.

We here in the United States, recognizing that situation, set up a program whereby we would ensure there would be local voices first on radio and then subsequently on television when that developed into the next important electronic medium of communication. But beginning in the 1980's, the Reagan administration advanced principles which allowed a handful of companies to increasingly own more and more radio stations, more and more television stations, and to dominate the public discourse, the public discussion, that was taking place in specific areas around the country. As a result of that, we have less local news on many local radio stations and television stations; people have a difficult time finding out what is going on in their community by listening to their local radio stations. Often the programming in those radio stations takes place thousands of miles away and has no relationship whatsoever to what is happening in those communities. There is no local voice, no local news voice, no local voice about what is happening in those communities as a result. And also, of course, we are finding uniformity in these communications media.

Now the Federal Communications Commission is taking the next step, or they want to take the next step. That

is the Republican-dominated communications commission, the three members, want to take the next step, and that is to allow in addition to the radio stations and the television stations in a broadcast area to be owned by a single entity, a single corporation, they now want to allow a system which will also allow for the newspaper in that media market to be owned by the same company.

This is a very dangerous situation. A democratic society must rely upon diversity of opinion. No one single person, no one corporation, no one entity has a patent on the truth. The way that we arrive at the truth in the United States of America is by the conflux of voices, by people expressing their opinions, expressing their views, and those views being heard and then people being elected on the basis of those diverse opinions. All of that is increasingly in jeopardy as a result of the actions that have been and continue to be taken by the Federal Communications Commission.

I am introducing a resolution to the House of Representatives sponsored by 72 Members of the House. That resolution calls upon the FCC to halt this process. I urge Members to come forward and support that resolution.

THE HIGH COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Madam Speaker, I come to the well of the House again tonight to talk about an issue that is an enormous issue particularly for seniors and that is the high cost of prescription drugs here in the United States. Today I received a copy of a new book by Katharine Greider, and the title of the book is "The Big Fix, How the Pharmaceutical Industry Rips Off American Consumers." Ms. Greider has done amazing research in terms of what is happening in the prescription industry here in the United States, and it is not a pretty picture. In fact, one of the most troubling statistics she came up with as she did her research is that 29 percent of the prescriptions written in the United States are not filled because people cannot afford them. And here we have our own FDA, the Food and Drug Administration, which literally is treating law-abiding citizens like common criminals simply because they want to go to a foreign country to buy drugs that they need.

Let me give an example. We talked about this before. There is a drug called Tamoxifen. Tamoxifen is a miracle drug and I sort of have a love-hate relationship with some of the people in the pharmaceutical industry because Tamoxifen is a miracle drug, and it has saved lots of American women from breast cancer.

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It is the most effective drug we have found. But the interesting thing is

much of the research was paid for by the American taxpayers through the NIH.

What is more troubling than that is that we bought this box of Tamoxifen a few weeks ago at the pharmacy at the Munich airport in Germany, and we bought this Tamoxifen for \$59.05 American. This same box of drugs in the same label under the same everything, the same dosage, here in Washington, DC, sells for \$360; \$59.05 in Munich, Germany; \$360 in the United States. It is outrageous.

Then you hear that 29 percent of Americans fail to have their prescriptions filled because they cannot afford the drugs. Our own FDA is standing between Americans and the drugs that they need.

We hear all the time that we have to pay a lot of money for prescription drugs because it is for research. She begins to break down in her book how much actually goes to research. Of the \$100 that we might spend for a typical prescription in the United States, use, for example, Lipitor, 35 percent of the cost that you pay is for marketing, advertising and administration; 26 percent is for what they call "other," such as manufacturing, executive pay, worker costs, labor and so forth; 24 percent is pure profit; and only 15 percent actually goes to research.

Madam Speaker, as I have said before, I am not here to say, shame on the pharmaceutical industry, although more and more people are. People who are doing the research are saying, shame on the pharmaceutical industry. The truth of the matter is it is shame on us, because we have created an environment where we literally hold American consumers hostage.

Imagine, for example, if there were two stores in town. One consistently had dramatically lower prices on the same products, and then there was another store that had dramatically higher prices. But yet your own government said you have to shop at the higher-priced store.

In an era with bar-coding technology and all the new technology we can use in terms of counterfeit-proofing these packages, we can come as close as humanly possible in guaranteeing this is, in fact, Tamoxifen, and whether you get it from Geneva, Switzerland, or Munich, Germany, or the local drugstore, your local pharmacist ought to have the ability to shop around and get you the best price.

Finally, let me explain how big a problem this is. Our own Congressional Budget Office tells us over the next 10 years seniors, just seniors, will spend \$1.8 trillion on prescription drugs. Conservatively we are spending 35 percent more than the rest of the G-7 countries on average. Thirty-five percent of \$1.8 trillion works out to \$630 billion.

Then some people say we cannot afford a prescription drug benefit. Of course we cannot afford a prescription drug benefit if we make American consumers pay the highest prices in the world, not just a little higher.

Do not take my word for it. There are several groups that are now doing the research. I do not know why the FDA does not do the research, because a drug you cannot afford is neither safe nor effective. Americans deserve world-class drugs at world-market prices.

FCC SHOULD ALLOW PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida.) Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, this past Monday I hosted a forum in my district with Federal Communications Commissioner Michael Copps about his agency's rules on media ownership. We had nearly 400 of my constituents packed into an auditorium at Dominican University in San Rafael. As their attendance testified, the FCC rules on media ownership is an extremely important issue and an issue that, unfortunately, has been underreported by the very media that will be most affected.

In fact, as proof of that, as proof of underreporting, today, just an hour or so ago, over a dozen concerned Democratic Members of Congress held a press conference on this very issue, the issue of media consolidation, and not one member of the press showed up, until, that is, a member of Roll Call, our newspaper here on the Hill, came to experience a press conference without press. We were glad that that individual showed, but that was as far as it went.

So, what is this all about? Well, on June 2, the Federal Communications Commission has scheduled a vote on new regulations that have the potential to drastically change the face of broadcasting and newspaper ownership, and, in so doing, the flow of free information.

First, the proposed changes to FCC rules would break down the decades-long firewall between media ownership in single markets. Gone will be the prohibitions against corporations owning newspapers and TV stations in the same town, or cable TV stations and TV stations in the same town. Gone also will be the limits on the number of TV stations and cable TV stations a corporation can own nationally. Also allowed would be cross-ownership of print media and broadcast media in the same media market.

In the 1996 Telecommunications Act, similar rules were proposed, but they were stopped by the threat of a veto by President Clinton. Now, under the Bush administration, the FCC Chairman, Michael Powell, who is an avowed free marketer, has said that these proposed rules should come back. Chairman Powell has scheduled a vote on the rule changes in less than a month, and, with a Republican majority on the Commission, these changes are pretty certain to pass.

It is a sham, and it is a shame, that the FCC has not scheduled official hearings across the Nation like the official one that Commissioner Copps and I hosted Monday in my district. The FCC has held only one, only one, official hearing on this subject, just outside the Beltway in Virginia.

If it was not for FCC Commissioners Copps and Jonathan Adelstein, it is doubtful that this discussion would have gone beyond a few lobbyists and public interest activists in the first place.

I am against the proposed deregulation, and I believe we should look back to the relaxation of radio ownership under the Telecommunications Act of 1996. We should use that for our guidance, because virtual elimination of radio ownership restrictions has resulted in a reduction of radio ownership by at least one-third across our Nation. In the San Francisco market alone, seven stations are now owned by Clear Channel Communications, seven by Infinity Broadcasting and three by ABC. Across the Nation, 10 companies broadcast to two-thirds of the Nation's radio audience and receive two-thirds of the broadcast revenues.

Let me say that again: Since the 1996 Telecommunications Act, 10 companies broadcast to two-thirds of the radio audience and receive two-thirds of the broadcast revenues nationwide.

Has the quality of radio broadcasting improved because of these changes? Is there more local programming, more local news, a greater variety of programming? Is there free flow of information, or is there censorship? Ask the Dixie Chicks.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues and I are cosponsoring House Resolution 218 that calls on the FCC to examine and inform the public of the consequences of the new round of deregulation. It asks that the FCC allow for extensive public review and comment on any proposed changes to media ownership rules before issuing a final rule.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ROHRABACHER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MAKING AMERICA'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WORSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, May 31 is going to be quite a sad day in the history of the United States Congress, but I believe that the real tragedy is for 36,500 Ohioans and over 2 million Americans whose unemployment benefits will expire on May 31.

I do not understand how we can look these people in the eye. I think it is