

warfare, and they declared war on the very survival of these families who are working at the margins. We see them every day. These are people who work hard in difficult jobs, in jobs that most people do not want. They get up and they ride transit, and they go to work and they work and they work and they come home, and at the end of the year they continue to be poor.

Past Congresses gave them the child tax credit, and this year when we decided we would give an increase in the child tax credit, we did not decide. The Republicans decided in the back rooms, they decided they would declare their own private war, their own private class warfare on these individuals. They decided to do it on the last night, in the back room, with the lights turned out and with Vice President CHENEY casting the deciding vote, who now declares he is ignorant on this. Then how did he vote for it? How did he vote for it?

Class warfare, the most mean-spirited, the most greedy action of class warfare we have seen was just committed by the Republican Party in the tax bill against struggling, working, lower-income families in this country.

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

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

RESTRICTION OF CIVIC PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MEDIA

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. Mr. Speaker, the Federal Communications Commission today struck a very hard and damaging blow against democracy. They did so in a very close four to three ruling that will allow media corporations to own more and more of the public information distribution system that we all rely upon for the information upon which we base our civic decisions, the information upon which we base our votes for Members of Congress and for other offices all across the country.

What is happening here? Why is it that the Republicans in the Federal Communications Commission are voting to restrict the voice of the American people while the Democrats are opposed to it? This is an issue that has been going on in this country now for almost three decades.

In 1987, the Federal Communications Commission of Ronald Reagan stripped the fairness doctrine or the equal access clause from the FCC rules. The fairness doctrine was a simple provision that was placed in the FCC rules early on in the 1930s. It stipulates that if someone who owns a broadcast station, then a radio station, but now radio or television, has a political opinion and they express it editorially they

have to provide for an alternative opinion by others in that community who may feel differently. That was stricken in 1987.

In 1996, the Telecommunications Act was passed, fashioned by the Republican majority in this House, which gave rise to the commission decision today to restrict civic public access to the media and allow it to be controlled by an increasingly smaller number of people, a handful of people.

This is damaging and dangerous to every democratic principle. It is damaging and dangerous to the future of this democratic republic.

□ 2000

Countries and governments such as ours, free countries, rely upon the open, free exchange of information. If you have a handful of people controlling the way information is distributed, you are not going to have a free and open exchange. That is dangerous to our country.

What did the ruling do today? Under the new rules, a national television network may now acquire dozens of local broadcast stations and control up to 90 percent of the national television market. A single corporation may now acquire, in one city, up to three television stations, eight radio stations, the cable television system, numerous cable television stations, and the daily newspaper as well. No diversity. No contrary opinion. One voice speaking to the public in community after community after community across this country.

When the Federal Communications Commission was established by this Congress, it was established in order to require that there be diversity and that the American people have access to the airwaves, which they own. The airwaves are owned by all the American people; they are not owned by one corporation or several corporations. Those corporations only lease them for periods of time. We need to return to a system where the American people have access to the means of communication in our Nation.

If we are going to preserve this democratic Republic, if we are going to save the essence of American democracy, we are going to have to have the opportunity to discuss different opinions on important political social issues, whether they are foreign or domestic, in the open so that everybody has a chance to have their voice heard. Not just the elite, not just the big corporations, not just the people with all the money and the power.

What is going on here? Why is there this connection and relationship between the Republican Party establishment here in Washington and the media corporations across the country? Republicans out there do not want to see this happen, groups as diverse as the National Consumer Network, the National Rifle Association, the Catholic Bishops, and a host of others have come out against this recent Federal

Communication decision. The people of this country, whether they are Republicans or Democrats, are opposed to it; but the Republican establishment here in Washington is creating a situation where people do not have access to their own airwaves, do not have access to their own media.

We are introducing legislation that is going to put a stop to this and reverse what has been going on now since at least 1987; and the sooner that legislation is passed, the sooner the American democracy will be saved.

FCC'S VOTE ON MEDIA OWNERSHIP RULES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise also to express my strong opposition to the recent vote that was taken today by the FCC. The three-two vote by the commission will allow for the concentration of media ownership in the hands of the very few and privileged and will reduce the diversity of viewpoints. This does not sound too American to me.

The decades-old rules that will be altered under today's vote were intended to provide for multiple media owners and voices in our market. Today's vote that was taken will reduce the assortment of voices and opinions that are essential to our healthy democracy. Allowing one company in a city to control the most popular newspaper and TV station will give the company excessive control over the local news and the information that the public sees and hears. It would also reduce the diversity of cultural and political disclosure in our communities.

Studies that I have seen indicate that, under these rules, mergers will be allowed in 140 local concentrated markets. In as many as 100 of these local markets, representing nearly half of the national population, there will probably be one dominant newspaper. A merger between a dominant newspaper and a large TV station would create a local news giant that would threaten alternative views and news.

Today's decision will have a detrimental impact on minority communities, including the Nation's fast-growing Latino population, the Spanish-language population. It will dramatically reduce competition in Spanish-language media and opportunities for Latino media ownership. Dominance in the Spanish-language media by one corporation can have the same negative effects for many Latinos as the dominance of English-language media can have for the general population.

Today's ruling by the FCC means less diverse programming, news sources, and smaller points of view. We need to look only at the radio industry to see the ill effects that today's vote will have on the diversity in media.

Since the passage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the overall number of radio station owners has decreased by at least 30 percent. And according to a study by the Department of Commerce, in the year 2000 minorities owned 248 AM stations and 178 FM stations. That represented 4 percent of the country's 10,577 commercial AM and FM stations.

I am especially disappointed that the public, the very people who own the airwaves, were not offered the time to express their concerns about this very important issue. How undemocratic of the FCC to keep the public in the dark on this very critical matter and not to afford the American people of this country, whom we represent, the opportunity to comment directly on the impact that the new specific policies will have on competition, localism, access to multiple sources of information, and minority participation.

Unfortunately, the amount of network coverage on this important issue has been minimal. We could not even get people from the media to show up to cover a press conference that we had last week to disclose what was happening with this vote that was taking place today. The public is largely unaware of the possible impact these changes will have on their lives; and it is discouraging, especially when millions of Americans have reacted in recent days with amazement at the FCC's plans. The FCC should have listened to the public, not the megacorporations.

Liberals and conservatives alike, consumer groups, labor groups, the National Rifle Association and others, have rallied around the cause and urged the FCC to allow more time for the public to comment on this critical matter.

When it comes down to it, today's vote was just another example of the Bush administration's catering to corporate greed. It is one more example of corporate welfare. It is a Bush-backed gift to the major corporations and their bank accounts. At the expense of whom? The public.

The FCC was created to serve the public interest and to ensure diverse voices in it. The commission failed on both accounts today. I urge this Chamber to consider legislation to reverse the commission's ruling and to allow the public greater opportunity to learn about this critical issue and weigh in with their important thoughts.

ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT TELL THE TRUTH

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, when you have been away from this House for a week, sometimes it is hard to tell what subject you ought to talk about first, because this administra-

tion is the gang that cannot shoot straight. They cannot tell anybody the truth about anything.

Whether it is weapons of mass destruction, where we have heard every story in the whole world, yet everywhere you look people do not believe the President of the United States, they do not believe our Secretary of War or anybody else when they talk about those weapons of mass destruction. Or we could talk about Medicare, or we could talk about the tax bill.

My colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), got up here and told the game that was run on the people in this House when they slammed the bill through here, this rubber stamp Congress. They did it in one 2-hour period. Bang, they passed out \$350 billion, but could not find \$3.5 billion to cover the kids of the working poor in this country. They could give money to millionaires, \$93,000; but they could not give even \$400 to the children of the working people of this country.

Now, there is an overarching question here and that is this whole question of whether you can solve this country's problems by tax cuts. You know, it takes the British. You have to read the British newspapers to find out what is going on in this country. If you read the Financial Times of London, they tell us that our President hid something from us when we were passing this bill. He hid from us a report done by his Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. O'Neill. Remember him? He was the guy before the one we have now. The one now is Snow, so I guess we will get Snow jobs. But the guy before was O'Neill.

Mr. O'Neill said to his staff, suppose the government could get its hands on all the revenue it could expect to collect in the future but had to use it today to pay off future expenditures, including debt service. Would the present value of the future revenues cover the present value of the future expenditures? Very simple question. He asked a guy from the Federal Reserve and his own assistant secretary to sit down and do this report. They did the report, and they came back with some pretty ugly facts. This thing was supposed to go into the budget to talk about what the future of this country was about, about those kids that cannot even get \$400 this year. This was a report that was supposed to go in about the future.

Their answer was, no, we cannot pay for it with the money that we need. We will be \$44 trillion in debt; \$44 trillion in debt because of what they are doing right now. Now, that is a number that, if you are sitting at home and you are thinking to yourself, my God, how much is \$44 trillion, well, think of it this way: imagine that everyone in this country worked for 4 years, every single day went to work for 4 years, everybody in the country, and handed over every penny to cover this \$44 trillion deficit. That is what it would take. Every man, woman and child. Even

those little kids that they could not find \$400 for now.

They are creating a problem out there that when their fathers and their mothers come to Medicare and come to Social Security, they will say, well, gee, we would like to help you out, but it is all gone. They are creating it right here in front of us. And it is bad enough, I mean, people voted, we did talk a little bit about it out here, people talked about it; but what is awful about this is that they knew these figures and they kept them from us.

Just like the weapons of mass destruction. There is a kind of a pattern, you see, in this administration. Feed the people the facts you want them to know, keep snapping your fingers so they will look up here, and meanwhile take away from them down here. They did it with weapons of mass destruction. We were assured. Our President said he has them. Our Secretary of State said he has them. He went to the United Nations and put up charts and graphs and all kinds of pictures. We have them, he said. The Secretary of War, Mr. Rumsfeld, he said the same thing. One after another these guys went down the line telling us what they knew was not true.

The Voice of America carried a very interesting interview with a man who came out of the Iraq situation. He was in the United States, and he said there were no weapons of mass destruction after 1991. This administration will not tell you the truth, but you are in for one awful problem dealing with \$44 trillion all of a sudden.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND RANSOM HOWARD

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in great sadness to honor my friend, Reverend Ransom Howard, the pastor for almost 4½ decades of First Sixth Street Baptist Church in Port Arthur, Texas. Reverend Ransom Howard died on Thursday, May 29.

Reverend Howard was a remarkable man who was committed to his community, to his country, and, above all, to his family. Reverend Howard was a long-time civic and community leader. He was always a man who believed in equality and justice. He fought hard for civil rights when it was not an easy thing to do, although it is never an easy thing to do. His impact on the community could be felt everywhere, but you could certainly say he was a positive force for all of southeast Texas.

Rev, as we called him, was instrumental in the integration of the Port Arthur public schools and city businesses. He served as youth director for the YMCA, was a past president of the NAACP, and president of the Concerned Citizens of the Port Arthur Association. He was of the utmost character, and his attributes of selflessness