

BROADCASTING IS NOT JUST A BUSINESS

It's a public trust

CCOM

CITIZENS COMMITTEE ON THE MEDIA

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WHAT IS THE CITIZENS COMMITTEE ON THE MEDIA?

The Citizens Committee On the Media is a broad-based citizen's organization working for reforms in the media. We are dedicated to the belief that open communications are the key to a free society. Through public forums and special events, our purpose is to build greater understanding of our rights to influence the media.

**IT IS THE RIGHT OF THE VIEWERS AND
LISTENERS, NOT THE RIGHT OF THE
BROADCASTERS WHICH IS PARAMOUNT.**

*Red Lion Case, 1969,
United States Supreme Court.*

**THE LAW SAYS THE AIRWAVES BELONG
TO ALL OF US, YET**

Community and non-profit organizations must beg for air time. Minorities, seniors, children, and the poor are overlooked because they are weak markets. Viewers must accept mediocre programs handed down by autocratic networks. The public has little voice in deciding what goes over the airwaves.

THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Because there is a limited number of frequencies and channels on the airwaves, broadcast stations are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Broadcasters, in exchange for holding such valuable property, are supposed to serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity. (Communications Act, 1934)

Over the years, the public trust concept has been eroded in favor of ever-increasing profits. Indeed, broadcasters are seeking deregulation and final abandonment of all laws governing their industry.

Radio and television were once envisioned as the medium that would educate and inform us. Instead, the media is seen only as mass entertainment for passive audiences.

Programs are packaged to be sold to the advertiser. The advertiser becomes the consumer. The public becomes the product. News becomes entertainment. Commercials interrupt more frequently. Network programming displaces local programming. Ratings decide what stays on the air.

Public participation is necessary. Citizens Committee on the Media is providing a new structure to protect the public interest. We affirm that broadcasting is not just a private business. It must serve the public need.