



Citizens Committee on the Media, Chicago; Robert G. Gallie, Exec. Dir.; to the U.S. House Communications Subcommittee Hearings; August 22, 1978.

Honorable Congresspersons, Fellow Witnesses, and Citizens:

The words "Red Lion" on the buttons I and others are wearing today refer to an historic United States Supreme Court decision in 1969, based on the 1934 Communications Act. The Red Lion Case upheld the principle that the primary rights in broadcasting are those of the public, not of the licenseholders. The public, not the broadcasters.

Red Lion means broadcast communication in a democratic society is too important to be abandoned to the profit and power motives of broadcasters and sponsors who can buy 'time'.

Red Lion means your proposed new Communications Act is upside-down and inside-out, because it viciously subordinates the rights of the public to alleged rights of self-serving monopolies.

Red Lion means the public would be better served if you came up with a bill that demands more, not less, of broadcasters.

Red Lion means demand more public service, more proof that programming is actually based on responsible ascertainment of community needs, more public access, more free speech messages and public service announcements at good times, more accountability by the networks and other owners of several stations, and more financial commitment to improve local public affairs programs.

Red Lion means demand more promises to the public at frequent, local, license renewal hearings; more divesting of stations where the owner does not live; more diversity of station and newspaper ownership; more resistance to 'payola' and bribes; more honesty about game shows and contests; and more freedom from commercial interruptions.

Red Lion means demand more responsible programming criteria than ad agency demographics, more affirmative hiring in management; and more realistic characters instead of insulting stereotypes.

Red Lion means demand more local documentaries, more live productions, more independent productions, more thorough reporting of community news, more non-commercial children's programs, and more coverage of our elected representatives in Congress.

Red Lion means today's hearings are not enough. The National Association of Broadcasters' lawyers may have been following your subcommittee's work closely, but the general public is only now discovering what is going on. It would help if you could assure us today that you will schedule much more extensive regional hearings in winter or spring, with more advanced public notice, with a telephone-loudspeaker arrangement for the transportation-handicapped, and with identity protection for broadcast professionals who can document the tension between commercial interests and the public interest. Will you assure us today that there will be more extensive regional hearings in winter or spring?

Finally, Red Lion means that as many of you as possible should come to our Chicago area conference on broadcasting the evening of September 30. (Call CCOM at 427-4064 for details.)

Red Lion--The American public owns the airwaves, and deserves better service from those licensed to use them.