

## Federal Communications Commission Washington

April 12, 2018

The Honorable Maria Cantwell United States Senate 511 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

Thank you for your letter requesting that the Commission investigate a broadcaster based on the content of its news coverage and promotion of that coverage. In light of my commitment to protecting the First Amendment and freedom of the press, I must respectfully decline.

A free media is vital to our democracy. That is why during my time at the Commission I have consistently opposed any effort to infringe upon the freedom of the press and have fought to eliminate regulations that impede the gathering and dissemination of news. Most relevant here, I have repeatedly made clear that the FCC does not have the authority to revoke a license of a broadcast station based on the content of a particular newscast.

I understand that you disliked or disagreed with the content of particular broadcasts, but I can hardly think of an action more chilling of free speech than the federal government investigating a broadcast station because of disagreement with its news coverage or promotion of that coverage. Instead, I agree with Senator Markey that "[a]ny insinuation that elected officials could use the levers of government to control or sensor [*sic*] the news media would represent a startling degradation of the freedom of the press." I also take this opportunity to reaffirm the commitment I made to several members of the Senate Commerce Committee last year that the Commission under my leadership would "not act in a manner that violates the First Amendment and stifles or penalizes free speech by electronic media, directly or indirectly."

Thank you for your interest, and let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

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