Committee on Energy and Commerce

Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology Ranking Member Doris Matsui

Hearing on "Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission"

January 14, 2026

Thank you, Chairman Hudson.

I'm glad we're holding this hearing. The Federal Communications Commission affects people's everyday lives. It determines whether you can call 911, whether your internet bill is affordable, and whether local news can do its job without political interference. Oversight is not optional. It's our responsibility.

The FCC serves the public… not any President… not any party… and not any one political agenda. It is supposed to be an independent, expert agency that promotes competition, protects public safety, and expands connectivity to our rural and urban communities.

But President Trump and Chairman Carr have repeatedly abused the FCC's power. We don't have speech police in America – we have the First Amendment. Yet under Chairman Carr we have seen a pattern of pressuring the media to toe the Administration's line.

He warned Disney and ABC stations, "We can do this the easy way or the hard way," to push them to take Jimmy Kimmel off the air. He threatened to investigate or revoke the license of local stations over content the Administration doesn't like. And he's opened investigations into newsrooms' routine editing decisions—such as CBS condensing an interview for time. That's not "calling balls and strikes." That's censorship by intimidation.

Chairman Carr has stretched the standards of acting in the "public interest" and preventing "news distortion" beyond recognition. The FCC's own guidance sets a high bar. For news distortion, the FCC can only go after "deliberate distortion," not "mere inaccuracy or difference of opinion." Yet, like the rest of the Trump Administration, this FCC seems to believe it is above the law and the Constitution.

That's why I introduced the Broadcast Freedom and Independence Act to draw a bright line: The FCC cannot target broadcasters based on viewpoint, and the White House cannot use the FCC to settle political scores.

The threats this FCC poses to journalistic independence have been local as well as national. In Sacramento, people rely on local stations for wildfire updates, flood warnings, and breaking news. Local news is a lifeline for communities. When a handful of companies control local stations, communities lose independent voices, newsrooms face layoffs, and viewers are left with fewer trusted sources. That's why Congress set strict limits for how big any one TV

station owner can get. No company can reach more than 39 percent of U.S. households. That's the law.

So it's deeply concerning when the Trump FCC appears open to deals that weaken local independence and plainly violate the law. Deals like Nexstar's acquisition of Tegna, which would create a media giant, reaching 80 percent of U.S. households.

And in Sacramento, Nexstar-Tegna would put two of our four English-language local TV news stations under the same owner. That should raise red flags for anyone who believes in protecting local news and competition.

Finally, I want to address cybersecurity. Our communications networks are critical infrastructure. They carry our calls, texts, and data. They support hospitals, small businesses, and emergency alerts. And they are under attack.

After Salt Typhoon, the worst telecom hack in U.S. history, the FCC began moving toward enforceable cybersecurity requirements for companies. Not just voluntary promises. But Chairman Carr reversed course, leaving our networks more exposed.

So today, we're going to put this record under a spotlight. The public deserves to know what Chairman Carr thinks "public interest" means, and why he's using it to pressure speech.

Communities deserve to know why local voices are being squeezed by consolidation. And Americans deserve to know why cybersecurity protections were weakened at the moment we need them most.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses, and I yield back.