

Who controls your NEWS and INFORMATION?

A THREAT TO OUR NATION

An independent press, protected by the First Amendment, is a founding principle of our democracy. It is at risk. The insatiable appetite for growth among a few huge media conglomerates is rapidly eliminating independent journalism in America.

Local newspapers, and television and radio stations, once devoted to an informed citizenry and answerable to their communities, are being bought up and run as merely profit centers for giant parent corporations. Quality and diversity are rapidly eroding.

A recent court decision in Philadelphia partially blocked the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) from relaxing media ownership rules. It was a great victory for democracy, but by no means is the battle won. Proponents of consolidation view the court ruling as simply a small setback in their continuing march toward greater control and financial reward.

Millions of Americans, across a wide spectrum of political and social views, have spoken out for maintaining rules that prevent virtually unbridled media consolidation. Congress has listened and made progress but not enough to safeguard the independence of our press.

Learn more and let your voice be heard. Here are just a few resources:

BOOKS: *The Problem of the Media, U.S. Communication Politics in the 21st Century*, Robert W. McChesney
Media Circus, The Trouble with America's Newspapers, Howard Kurtz
Breaking the News, How the Media Undermine American Democracy, James Fallows
Breach of Faith, A Crisis of Coverage in the Age of Corporate Newspapering, Gene Roberts and Thomas Kunkel

WEB SITES: *Consumers Union*: <http://www.consumersunion.org/i/Telecom__Utilities/Media_Ownership/index.html>
Common Cause: <<http://www.commoncause.org/action/action.cfm?topicid=11>>
Journalism.org: <<http://www.journalism.org/resources/research/reports/ownership/deregulation2.asp>>
FreePress.net: <<http://www.mediareform.net/>>

A THREAT TO OUR COMMUNITY

The Seattle Times is one of the few remaining independent metropolitan newspapers in the country. We are a local, family owned business committed to quality, independent journalism. The Blethen family believes that serving our readers, and being good stewards of your newspaper, is a special privilege.

This newspaper is now too at risk. The Hearst Corporation, a multibillion-dollar media conglomerate headquartered in New York, is trying to bleed us financially until we are forced to sell to them. Hearst's takeover strategy has worked in other cities and now they want to "own" Seattle.

Hearst is using the legal system to try to keep us locked in a losing joint operating agreement (JOA). It doesn't matter that Hearst's legal claims lack validity. Even if Hearst doesn't prevail in court, prolonged, expensive litigation works in Hearst's favor by tying us up in court and draining our resources. With its deep pockets, Hearst plans to outlast us. But we intend to fight back. We have sold millions of dollars worth of assets — what we can sell without jeopardizing the quality of our content and service — to take a stand for independent journalism.

We encourage our readers to help by speaking out about the threat here in Seattle. Let your community leaders, and local and national elected representatives, know you want to stop Hearst from gobbling up yet another community's newspaper.

To get more information or share your views, please e-mail us at mycomments@seattletimes.com or write to My Comments, P.O. Box 70, Seattle, WA 98111. **THANK YOU.**

Now is not the time to be silent.