

views of the public. That is very interesting.

Mr. President, now Michael Powell is going to have a task force designed to prevent any media company from having excess power over competition or viewpoints.

He does that after two of the commissioners begged for public hearings. They literally begged. They were told they did not have money enough, and they could only hold one hearing. That hearing was held in Richmond.

From their own particular little budget, they had 13 hearings. Now a firestorm has erupted. You not only have the National Rifle Association and consumer groups, but you have the people of authority and respect such as Walter Cronkite and Barry Diller. You can go right on down the list all saying this is the worst thing that could possibly happen.

The interesting thing is that Commissioner Powell says they have "produced a balanced structural rule faithful to the directors of Congress." Total, total applesauce—applesauce and baloney. I can tell you that we begged and we coached. I thought maybe it was a personality difference.

I get along with his father, Secretary Powell. In fact, he and I received honorary degrees at Tuskegee together. He calls me Dr. Hollings. I call him Dr. Powell. I have provided him every red cent he has ever wanted for State Department appropriations as Secretary of State. I have that particular appropriations.

But Michael Powell is a different character entirely. He is very competent, very smart, and very intelligent, but not a regulator. He just believes that the public interest is an empty vessel and the market forces should control. When he says "faithful to the directors of Congress," that is exactly what he has not been. He has been totally unfaithful. We begged him to hold up the order.

This particular reference in the order itself shows that he thinks they need big hearings on localism. Why didn't he hold up the order before he had the task force, before he had the hearings? The task force will make legislative recommendations to Congress to strengthen localism. We fought like tigers to try to get him to listen, and he just absolutely would not listen.

Mr. President, quoting from this morning's Wall Street Journal:

Entertainment giants such as Viacom, NBC parent General Electric Co. and Walt Disney Co., which owns ABC, now reach more than 50 percent of the prime-time television audience through their combined broadcast and cable outlets. The total rises to 80 percent, if you include the parents of newer networks—such as News Corp.'s FOX and AOL, Time-Warner, Inc.'s WB—and NBC's pending acquisition of Vivendi Universal SA's cable assets, estimates Tom Wolzien, an analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein & Co.

The big media companies are quietly recreating the "old programming oligopoly" of the pre-cable era, notes Mr. Wolzien, a former executive of NBC. Of the top 25 cable

channels, 20 are now owned by 1 of the big 5 media companies.

They own each other. You talk to Chairman Powell, and he says, Look, cable is going to be taken over and there won't be any free broadcast. The free broadcaster is the one who owns the cable. He is totally off base. He just will not regulate. An order for localism is a sham and a farce. The American people ought to understand it and they ought to understand why we do not have the support of the National Association of Broadcasters. They want to enhance the value of their individual stations. They see if you can get the cross-ownership, the value of their station locally. One of the big oligarchies will give an inordinate price and they can go to Virginia Beach, the sun, take it easy, and will not have to worry.

I appreciate the indulgence of the Senate at this late hour. I only ask that you give close attention to the bipartisan Dorgan-Lott resolution, that we disapprove it, and put us back to where we were before they started a feeding frenzy, according to all the stockbrokers in the market in New York, ready to buy up all the rest of the stations as soon as it becomes effective. It has been stayed by the court. Rather than causing chaos, it will bring us back and maybe we can find out from the task force of localism, of Chairman Powell, what really needs to be done, what the public interest is.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATIONS ON 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, today I would like to congratulate Chapter 0336 of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, NARFE, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary.

Fifty years ago, Chapter 0336 was formed by 17 NARFE members in Rapid City, SD. Today, the chapter's membership has grown to include over 200 persons. As many of my colleagues know, NARFE has been instrumental in protecting the rights of retired Federal and civilian employees.

The importance of Federal employees is well illustrated by the overwhelming majority of those in the Chamber today. Federal and civilian employment is an essential component of governmental efficiency. These employees are the backbone of our great country, and those who devote their lives to public service deserve to know that they will retire with dignity.

By acting as an advocate for these retirees, NARFE not only ensures that retirees receive the benefits that were

promised to them but also aims to improve future conditions for current Federal and civilian employees. The years of experience on Capitol Hill and in Federal agencies have made NARFE a name respected by Members of Congress and a key player in the Federal community.

Throughout my congressional career, NARFE offices across my State have contacted me on numerous occasions urging me to support legislation beneficial to those who helped strengthen our country over the past decades. Its members have always been forthright in suggesting legislative remedies for their problems—I appreciate that.

Again, I wish to extend my congratulations to all involved in making this momentous occasion possible, and I look forward to working closely with Chapter 0336 and other NARFE offices well into the future.

THE AL NEUHARTH MEDIA CENTER

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, today I would like to salute a great American and South Dakotan, Mr. Al Neuharth. As the founder of USA Today, former chief executive officer of Gannett New Service, and founder of the Freedom Forum, he has made immeasurable contributions to our understanding of the world.

Mr. Neuharth's commitment to free speech and the press began with a paper route in Eureka, SD, when he was 11 years old. Al continued to work in local media throughout his youth, later in the composing room at the weekly Alpena Journal in neighboring Alpena. Following his service in World War II, Al returned home to South Dakota, graduating from the University of South Dakota in 1950 with a degree in journalism.

Upon graduation, Al Neuharth began what would be a historic career in print media. He began working for the Associated Press in Sioux Falls, SD, as a reporter and soon launched his first publication, a statewide weekly tabloid called SoDak Sports. While SoDak Sports would not prove to be his most successful venture, Mr. Neuharth pressed forward as a journalist. In 1954, he became a reporter at the Miami Herald, quickly ascending the ranks, and in 1960 he was named assistant executive editor of the Detroit Free Press. This remarkable success demonstrates that Al's talent for straight truth and love of communication was visible to all who worked with him. In 1963, Neuharth began his career with Gannett News Service as the general manager of its two Rochester, NY, newspapers. Only 7 years later he was named president and chief executive officer of Gannett News Service, a position he held until his retirement in 1989. Under Al's leadership, the company launched USA Today in 1980—the first national daily newspaper—and their reputation for quality journalism has grown each year since.