

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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June 2, 2014

The Honorable Thomas Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

On December 18, 2013 the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to eliminate the Commission's sports blackout rules and requested subsequent public comment on the proposal. Now that the comment deadline has long passed, we urge the Commission to move forward expeditiously on eliminating the sports blackout rule (SBR). We believe that the rule unfairly harms consumers by insulating the NFL from market realities and punishing fans in cities with large stadiums and declining populations. We applaud the FCC's decision to propose elimination of this outdated rule that is no longer supported by facts or logic, and blocks fans from enjoying their favorite teams.

Since the Commission voted unanimously to adopt the sports blackout NPRM, you have heard from consumers, economists, academics, professional sports leagues, broadcasters, cable operators, satellite TV providers, and Internet Service Providers, producing a robust and detailed record. This thorough record is further enriched by the original proceeding, established two years ago, seeking comment on what factors the Commission should consider before writing the current proposed rulemaking.

We agree wholeheartedly with the Commission that, "the sports blackout rules have become obsolete," and we believe the record clearly supports the FCC's tentative conclusions in favor of eliminating this unnecessary rule. In sum, the Commission has collected the facts and has a rich public record upon which to base a decision. Now it must act. We ask that you commit to bringing a final order to a vote within the next 60 days.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



JOHN McCAIN
United States Senate