

United States Senate

July 10, 2025

The Honorable Olivia Trusty
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioner Trusty,

Congratulations on your recent confirmation to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). We write today regarding the proposed merger between Paramount Global and Skydance Media now pending before the FCC. Paramount's recent agreement to settle for \$16 million a frivolous lawsuit brought by President Donald Trump against CBS — a Paramount subsidiary — over its editorial decision-making raises serious questions about Paramount's rationale for the settlement and its implications for media independence. For that reason, we urge you to insist that the FCC conduct its merger review with the utmost transparency, including holding a full Commission vote on any order to approve the merger.

As we explained in a letter to Chairman Brendan Carr in May,¹ the Paramount-Skydance merger is unique in the FCC's storied history, with the sitting President actively litigating against a news organization whose parent is seeking FCC approval of a major media merger. In that baseless lawsuit, Trump falsely alleged that CBS had violated state consumer protection laws through its editorial decisions around an interview of then-Vice President Kamala Harris. Although the transcript of the interview indisputably showed that Trump's claims were a flagrant attempt to intimidate the media,² Paramount has nevertheless agreed to settle that lawsuit for \$16 million.³ This settlement casts a shadow over the proposed Paramount-Skydance merger and raises serious questions about the editorial independence of one of the nation's largest media organizations. The Commission cannot turn a blind eye to this context.

For that reason, in our May letter, we urged Chairman Carr to hold a vote on the merger by the full Commission, instead of unilaterally directing the Media Bureau to approve it on its delegated authority. Commissioner Anna Gomez has similarly called for a full Commission vote

¹ Letter from Senators Edward J. Markey and Ben Ray Lujan, to Brendan Carr, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission (May 13, 2025), https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_fcc_on_paramount-skydance_merger_vote.pdf.

² See, e.g., Joe Lancaster, *Transcript Proves the 60 Minutes Scandal Was Always Fake*, Reason Magazine (Feb. 6, 2025), <https://reason.com/2025/02/06/transcript-proves-the-60-minutes-scandal-was-always-fake/>; Brian Stelter, *The FCC just published CBS' raw Kamala Harris '60 Minutes' interview*, CNN (Feb. 5, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/05/media/cbs-kamala-harris-60-minutes-interview/index.html>.

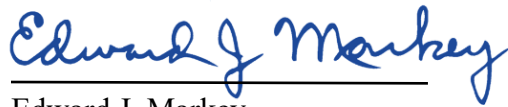
³ See, e.g., Benjamin Mullin et al., *Paramount to Pay Trump \$16 Million to Settle '60 Minutes' Lawsuit*, N.Y. Times (July 2, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/02/business/media/paramount-trump-60-minutes-lawsuit.html>.

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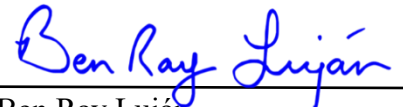
on the merger.⁴ We respectfully request you to join her and encourage Chairman Carr to schedule a full Commission vote. The FCC owes the public a transparent, deliberative process on such a high-profile and controversial issue.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to ensure that our media and communications systems serve the public interest, uphold democratic values, and reflect the highest standards of transparency and accountability.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator

⁴ Statement, FCC Commissioner Anna M. Gomez on Paramount Payout (July 2, 2025), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-412662A1.pdf> (“Approving this transaction behind closed doors and under the cover of bureaucratic process would be a shameful outcome that denies the American people the transparency and accountability they deserve, especially when press freedom is at stake.”).