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United States Senate

October 11, 2017

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The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai,

I write to urge you to maintain the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) charter as an independent agency and withstand any urges from President Trump to harm the news media and infringe upon the First Amendment.

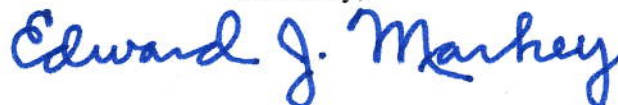
This morning, President Trump tweeted "[w]ith all of the Fake News coming out of NBC and the Networks, at what point is it appropriate to challenge their License? Bad for country!"

In response to President Trump's question, it is inappropriate for the President to propose challenging broadcasters' licenses because he disagrees with their coverage. The First Amendment is the cornerstone of our democracy, and the news media plays an instrumental role in educating the American public and holding elected officials accountable. Any insinuation that elected officials could use the levers of government to control or censor the news media would represent a startling degradation of the freedom of press.

I ask for your commitment to resist the President's request and call on you to publicly refuse to challenge the license of any broadcaster because the President dislikes its coverage. Please provide information about any correspondence or communications from the White House or other members of the Trump administration that have encouraged you to take action against a broadcaster.

I thank you for your attention to this important matter, and respectfully request that you respond to my inquiry no later than November 1, 2017.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator