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March 15, 2026

Brendan Carr
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Carr,

Your Saturday post on X threatening to revoke broadcasters' licenses if they do not cover President Donald Trump's illegal war with Iran with Trump's preferred narrative is an extraordinary abuse of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) authority and a clear violation of the First Amendment. You are effectively demanding that broadcasters become state media and echo the Trump administration's false talking points on this reckless, unconstitutional war. This threat is just your latest authoritarian attempt to weaponize the FCC's statutory authority to censor the media. It is a stain on the FCC's storied history, and you should resign.

Your post on Saturday demonstrated your continued effort to turn the FCC into Trump's personal speech police. On Saturday, President Trump posted on Truth Social claiming that certain outlets — none of which was a broadcaster — misleadingly reported on the Iran war and accusing the outlets of wanting the United States to “lose the War.”¹ Within hours, you reposted Trump's complaint and appended your own warning: “Broadcasters that are running hoaxes and news distortions — also known as the fake news — have a chance now to correct course before their license renewals come up. The law is clear. Broadcasters must operate in the public interest, and they will lose their licenses if they do not.”² This threat is clear as day: Cover the Iran war as Trump wants or the Carr FCC will try to destroy you.

Although you have attempted to justify this blatant attempt to muzzle the free press by citing broadcasters' obligation to act in the public interest, this public interest standard does not give the FCC a blank license to censor speech the President dislikes. The public interest standard was never conceived as a mechanism by which the executive branch could dictate editorial content, let alone enforce the President's preferred narrative about a war he is waging. Even in *Red Lion Broadcasting v. FCC* — which you have repeatedly cited to justify your threats³ — the

¹ Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social (Mar. 14, 2026, 9:35 AM), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/116227789768118115>.

² Brendan Carr (@BrendanCarrFCC), X (Mar. 14, 2026, 12:24 PM), <https://x.com/BrendanCarrFCC/status/2032855414233047172>.

³ See, e.g., Brendan Carr (@BrendanCarrFCC), X (Mar. 14, 2026, 4:00 PM), <https://x.com/BrendanCarrFCC/status/2032909862305235397>.

Supreme Court noted that the case did not involve “government censorship of a particular program ... or of the official government view dominating public broadcasting.”⁴ Yet, that is exactly your intent: to ensure that broadcasters publish only Trump’s view on the Iran war. Cover the war in a different manner and the FCC may revoke your license or deny your license renewal — a death sentence for a broadcaster. This blatant attempt to control the news media — which bears striking similarities to censorship laws in Russia and other authoritarian countries — is antithetical to the First Amendment and an egregious abuse of the FCC’s statutory authorities.⁵

Your Saturday post is not an aberration. It is the latest and most dangerous step in a sustained campaign to use the FCC’s licensing authority as a weapon against broadcasters and journalists whose coverage displeases the Trump administration. In January 2025, you reinstated baseless complaints against ABC, CBS, and NBC affiliates — brought by a right-wing advocacy organization — without reinstating a similar complaint against a Fox station.⁶ Soon after, you opened an investigation into a San Francisco radio station because of its reporting on immigration operations in the local community.⁷ Last September, after Jimmy Kimmel made controversial comments in his monologue, you publicly threatened ABC and Disney with license revocations, using the mafioso line: “We can do this the easy way or the hard way.”⁸ In each of these actions, you threatened regulatory consequence to pressure a specific broadcaster over specific editorial decision-making that displeased President Trump. Your Saturday post follows that same logic but extends it to the coverage of an active military conflict, where the chilling effect on journalists and the damage to the public’s right to know are most severe.

The FCC’s credibility depends on its willingness to exercise its authority on the merits, not at the direction of the President, and not as an instrument of retribution against journalism. You have once again shown that you are unwilling to maintain that independence and uphold your sworn oath to defend the U.S. Constitution, and I once again call on you to resign.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

⁴ *Red Lion Broad. Co. v. FCC*, 395 U.S. 367, 396 (1969).

⁵ See, e.g., Anton Troianovski & Valeria Safronova, *Russia Takes Censorship to New Extremes, Stifling War Coverage*, N.Y. Times (Mar. 4, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/04/world/europe/russia-censorship-media-crackdown.html>.

⁶ See, e.g., David Shepardson, *FCC reinstates complaints against ABC, CBS and NBC for 2024 election coverage*, Reuters (Jan. 23, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/fcc-reinstates-complaints-over-abc-presidential-debate-harris-tv-appearances-2025-01-22/>.

⁷ See, e.g., Byron Tau, *How an AM Radio Station in California Weathered the Trump Administration's Assault on Media*, Associated Press (Dec. 15, 2025), <https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/spotlights/2025/how-an-am-radio-station-in-california-weathered-the-trump-administrations-assault-on-media/>.

⁸ See, e.g., Gene Maddaus, *FCC Chairman Threatens ABC Over Jimmy Kimmel’s Remarks About Charlie Kirk’s Killer*, Variety (Sept. 17, 2025), <https://variety.com/2025/tv/news/brendan-carr-abc-fcc-jimmy-kimmel-charlie-kirk-1236522406/>.