

United States Senate

September 29, 2025

Senator Ted Cruz
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz,

On September 18, 2025, I led a letter with ten of my Senate colleagues to Federal Communications Commission Chairman (FCC) Brendan Carr after his comments on a right-wing podcast threatening Disney, ABC, and their affiliates over political commentary by comedian Jimmy Kimmel.¹ In that letter, we raised fundamental questions about the First Amendment, the FCC's "public interest" standard, and Carr's threats to ABC, Disney, and their affiliates that, "We could do this the easy way or the hard way" — a line that you said sounded like something out of *Goodfellas*. In his response to our letter, Carr ignored our important questions and whitewashed his role in the incident.² This is unacceptable. I urge you to bring Carr before the Senate Commerce Committee for an oversight hearing as soon as possible.

Our letter to Carr asked critical questions about his statements and role in the Kimmel incident. Importantly, Carr has repeatedly pointed to broadcasters' obligation to act in the "public interest" as justification for his investigations into their programming decisions. We therefore asked how the FCC, under Carr, was defining the "public interest" standard and whether it included an ideological neutrality test. We also asked whether he, his staff, or any FCC staff communicated with Disney, ABC, or their affiliates about Kimmel's monologue, and asked him to produce copies of any communications. Finally, we asked Carr to explain what he meant when he stated, "We could do this the easy way or the hard way," including what he meant by "easy way" or "hard way." These oversight questions are all reasonable and important.

Carr ignored all these questions. Instead, his letter reframed the matter as nothing more than independent decisions by ABC, Disney, and their affiliates, ignoring the reality that it was his own threats that appeared to trigger those decisions. Carr did not provide a single substantive

¹ Letter from Senator Edward J. Markey et al. to Brendan Carr, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission (Sept. 18, 2025), <https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/250918lettertochairmancarr.pdf>.

² Letter from Brendan Carr, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission, to from Senator Edward J. Markey (Sept. 25, 2025), https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/250925_letter_from_chairman_carr_to_senmarkey.pdf.

Chairman Cruz
September 29, 2025
Page 2

response to our questions about the FCC's public interest standard, communications with Disney, ABC, and their affiliates, or the meaning of his "easy way or hard way" threat. This evasion is unacceptable. Carr cannot pretend to be a neutral bystander when his own public remarks — which you rightfully criticized — sparked censorship of protected speech. Nor can he defy Congress's oversight role by refusing to answer direct questions about his conduct.

For these reasons, I urge you, as Chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, to bring Carr before the Committee without delay. No FCC Chairman should be permitted to weaponize the Commission against disfavored speech while stonewalling legitimate congressional inquiries.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator