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New Jersey Citizens Fight for Their Voice



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Tomorrow, Wednesday, Nov. 28th, there is going to be an unprecedented hearing in New Jersey. Concerned citizens and public interest groups have petitioned the FCC to deny WWOR-TV 9's license to broadcast on the public airwaves, asserting that they have not lived up to their commitment to serve New Jersey communities.

It's one of the first public hearings the FCC has held to investigate a license renewal of a TV station in decades. As such, this could be a precedent setting event, empowering other communities to hold hearings looking into their local TV and radio station's public service.

To find out more about the hearing, visit: www.stopbigmedia.com/=newark or www.voicenj.com.

The concerns of local New Jersey citizens were filed in petitions by the Office of Communications Inc. of the United Church of Christ, Rainbow PUSH, Voice for New Jersey. Below is a summary of some of the points these local citizens found in their research and from their



personal experience. (All facts presented here were taken from research and petitions to deny WWOR's broadcast license filed with the FCC by groups representing local citizens.)

- In the first nine months of 2006 WWOR reported less than 10 hours of total news programming. Of that, a scant 2.66 hours (27%) was dedicated to New Jersey stories. WWOR rarely spent more than 10 minutes of news broadcasts dedicated to New Jersey coverage.
- According to WWOR's own data, over a seven year period from 1999-2006 they broadcast fewer than 170 New Jersey news stories per year. That is less than one New Jersey story every two days.
- Over the course of a 15 month study only 46% of New Jersey stories on WWOR covered government and politics. In its report, "Service to New Jersey," WWOR included sports stories to boost the number of local news stories they reported.
- In 2006 WWOR only aired 30 public affairs shows dedicated to New Jersey. The majority of these programs aired for only 30 minutes, meaning that WWOR averages less than 1.5 hours of public affairs programming per month.
- The station carried virtually no coverage of local and regional elections. In the 30 days prior to the 2005 New Jersey elections WWOR ran only 10 stories focused on the New Jersey election and 9 of those focused on the governor's race. 7 of the 10 stories aired in the final week before the election.
- Since acquiring the license for WWOR, Channel 9, Fox has repeatedly shown that it would rather incorporate the station into its New York City media empire rather than serve the citizens of New Jersey. For example, in 2004, Fox planned to move the bulk of the station's operations to New York City, prompting an outrage in New Jersey. In the face of Congressional pressure, Fox finally backed down and decided to remain in New Jersey.
- A brief look at the station's website is enough to show that the station is now targeting the New York audience, not the New Jersey one. The main station page has a picture of the New York City skyline, with the station's new name, "My 9 New York" displayed prominently.
- As of November 18, 2007, "New Jersey" does not appear once on the station's homepage. The weather section brings up the current weather conditions and forecast for Central Park, New York, rather than anywhere in New Jersey. The public affairs section gives a phone and fax number to contact the Public Affairs Department; both numbers have New York area codes.