

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 13, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
House Speaker
U.S House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi:

As part of an agreement to raise the federal debt ceiling, we understand that Congress may include language to grant authority to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to conduct voluntary incentive auctions for the purpose of inducing some television broadcasters to turn in their current licenses. We would urge you to ensure that federal legislation and spectrum policies authorizing incentive auctions are structured so that broadcasters' decisions are truly voluntary, and so that broadcasters who wish to continue to serve the public may do so. As importantly, we also urge you to ensure that legislation and policies do not work to deny viewers over-the-air access to diverse programming and emerging services, such as digital multicast, high definition, and mobile DTV.

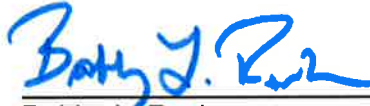
We would urge you to ensure that (1) viewers do not lose access to their current roster of television stations because of increased interference or reduced coverage areas, (2) television stations are not involuntarily relocated in a manner that would preclude them from offering innovative new services, and (3) television stations are reimbursed for costs associated with relocating to new channels.

We want to make sure that voluntary incentive auctions do not threaten diversity of programming. It concerns us that many television stations, particularly those independently owned and operated broadcast television networks aimed at minority audiences, could be imperiled if broadcasters are "repacked" onto new channels without sufficient safeguards.

For instance, new niche minority-oriented networks are beginning to avail themselves of multicasting opportunities due to the digital television transition. Bounce TV, which is owned by a group of African American investors, including Andrew Young and Martin Luther King III, is a new over-the-air television network aimed at African American audiences. Bounce TV is planning its launch this fall with a mix of movies, live sports and original programming over the digital multicast signals of local television stations. Initially, Bounce TV programming will air on approximately 60 broadcast station outlets covering 35 percent of the country, giving underserved African American consumers a new, free local television brand designed specifically for them.

Broadcast television is relied upon by 99 percent of the American population. In fact, some 46 million Americans depend exclusively on free over-the-air broadcasting as their only source of television. Many of those viewers are impoverished, elderly, live in rural areas, or are members of an ethnic minority. As you are considering legislation to grant the FCC the authority to conduct voluntary incentive auctions, we ask that you consider the aforementioned safeguards and our concerns.

Respectfully,



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Edolphus "Ed" Towns
Member of Congress



G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress