

## Memorandum

To: Interested Parties  
From: Tony Fabrizio and Bob Ward  
Date: January 28, 2026  
Re: Voters back modernizing outdated TV ownership rules

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Fabrizio Ward recently polled 1,000 registered voters nationally on their opinions and viewing habits related to video content and local TV.

### Bottom Line

The options available for video content, from local TV to streaming services are diverse and expanding. Competition among content providers for viewers and for advertisers is fierce. Similarly, sources for local news are increasingly diverse, with more voters likely to get their local news from social media than from local TV stations. It is no wonder, then, that most voters view ownership restrictions for local TV stations as being unfair and why most voters think local TV station owners should be able to compete for ad revenue and viewers without government-imposed restrictions. Politicians also need to remember that local TV has its following: older voters who play a disproportionate role in elections, especially midterm elections and lower turnout elections, because they show up. Among those relying on local TV news, they will be more inclined to vote for the Member of Congress who helps local stations compete and against those who do not.

### Competition is fierce

The vast majority of voters know that competition for their content viewing is intense. Eighty percent of voters agree that content provided by local TV stations is just a small part of choices that are available to people for video content today. The diversity of choices is evident in how people tell us they consume video content: 65% are watching live TV but are getting this from a range of sources, with streaming the top source at 38%. Just 20% use cable and 9% use satellite, the same share as are still getting live TV through an antenna. Two thirds of voters (65%) are subscribed to streaming services, mostly Netflix and Prime Video, with a third of those subscribed to streaming services getting live TV through YouTube TV.

### Local News

Half of voters are getting local news from their local TV stations in addition to many other sources, which means half are not. Local TV is still very important for many but is also competing fiercely for viewership. The top source for local news in 2026: social media. Despite the diversity of news sources, local TV news is the most trusted, with 55% of voters saying they trust it at least somewhat. Local TV viewers are also the most reliable voters. The share of viewers of local TV news that voted in four of the past four elections is 55%, compared to just 37% of those who do not get their local news from TV, a fact politicians need to remember when setting policy impacting local TV. Age is the main driver of this electoral performance; 63% of local TV viewers are age 50+ compared to just 37% of those who do not get their local news from TV.

### Local Station Ownership

A majority of voters, by a 38-point margin (58%-20%), see the 1941 law restricting local TV station ownership as being unfair when similar restrictions are not placed on other forms of video and news content. This view of the laws' unfairness is shared on both sides of the political aisle – Trump voters say it is unfair by 36-points and Harris voters by 43-points. The view that the law is unfair is held whether one is a consumer of live TV (+37) or not (+42).

Similarly, most voters by a wide margin (57%-15%) think local TV station owners should be able to compete without government-set limits just as national cable networks and streaming companies are allowed to. The margins in favor of allowing the station owners to compete without restrictions are sizable among both Trump voters (+44) and Harris voters (+39); among those relying on local TV news (+47) and those who don't (+37); and among those watch live TV at all (+42) and those who do not (+40).

### Negative Impact on Local TV Stations

Consumers of local TV news understand that the impact to them will be negative rather than positive by a 10 to 1 margin (41% say negative impact, 4% say positive impact) if their local TV station had to cut back on the news, weather, sports and other local programming due to decreasing advertising revenue.

In this highly competitive environment for viewers and advertisers, a majority of voters, by a 43-point margin, voters are looking for government to make it easier (52%) for local TV stations to compete for advertisers against national networks rather than harder (9%).

### Pressure on Members of Congress

There is both a political reward and price to pay for Members of Congress depending on how they address the issue of allowing local TV station owners to compete. By an eight-to-one margin, voters who get their local news from TV would be less likely rather than more likely to vote for a Member of Congress who ***opposed*** local TV station owners being allowed to compete nationally for advertising against cable networks and internet streamers: 40% less likely to vote, 14% more likely to vote. Among the same group of voters, the Member of Congress who ***supports*** local TV station owners being allowed to compete nationally for advertising against cable networks and internet streamers would enjoy a wide margin of support: 42% would be more likely to vote for the Member versus 13% who would be less likely.

## Methodology

Fabrizio Ward conducted a survey January 20-22, 2026 of 1,000 registered voters nationally. Quotas were set by region, age, gender, partisan affiliation, education, and race/ethnicity. Data was weighted by region, age, gender, recalled 2024 vote, education, and race/ethnicity. Margin of sampling error for n1,000 is  $\pm 3.1\%$  at the 95% confidence level. The interviews were conducted via cell phones (40%), landlines (15%), and SMS-to-Web (45%) to voters sampled from the voter file.

## Key Demographics

### Party Affiliation

Republican	36
Independent	27
Democrat	34
Other/Ref	2

### 2024 Vote

Donald Trump	42
Kamala Harris	41
Someone else	6
Did not vote	9
Refused	1

### Race/Ethnicity

White	68%
Latino/Hispanic	12
African American/Black	12
Asian American	4
Native American	2
Other (SPECIFY)	*
Refused	2

### Age

18-34	25%
35-49	24
50-64	24
65+	26
Refused	1

### Education

High School or Less	24%
Some College	37
4-Year College	23
Post-Grad degree	16
Refused	<1

### Gender

Male	47%
Female	51
Other	2

Chart 1

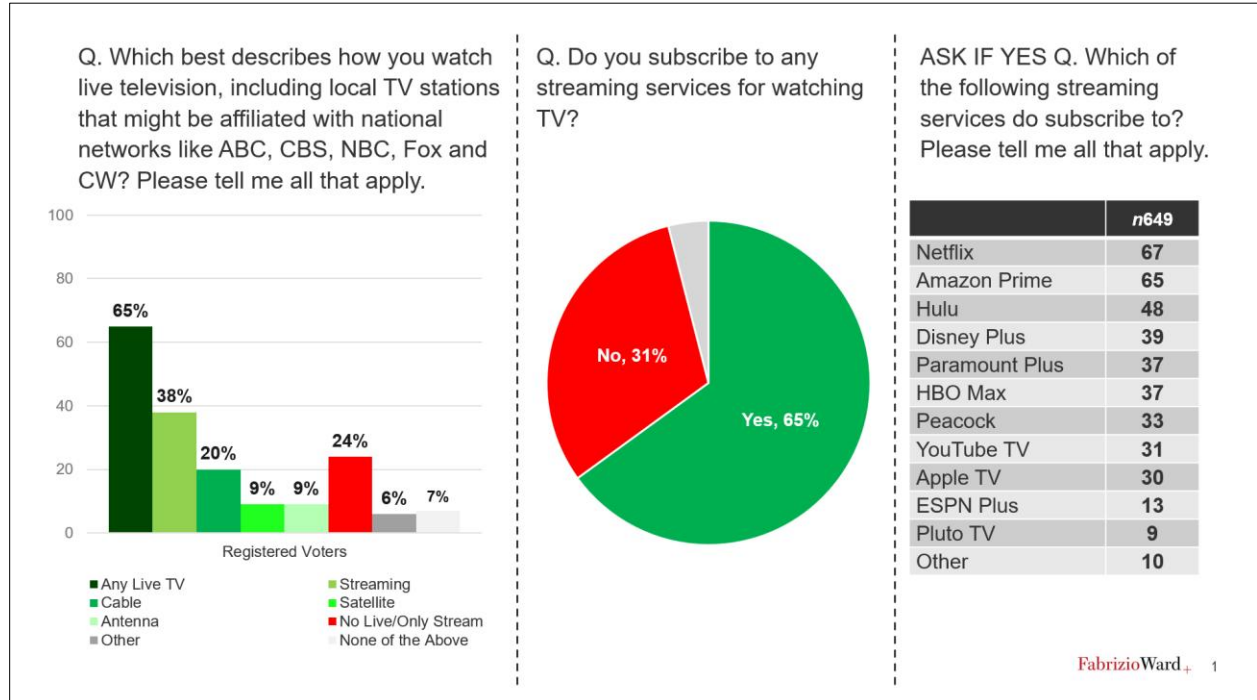


Chart 2

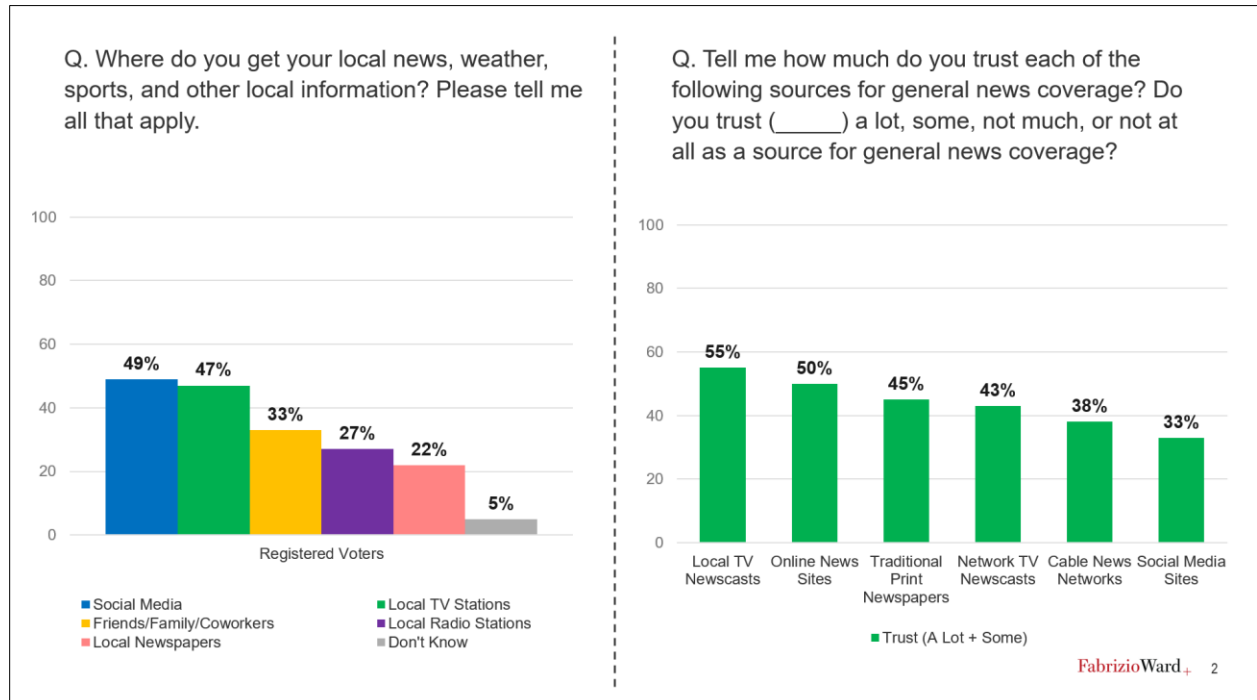


Chart 3

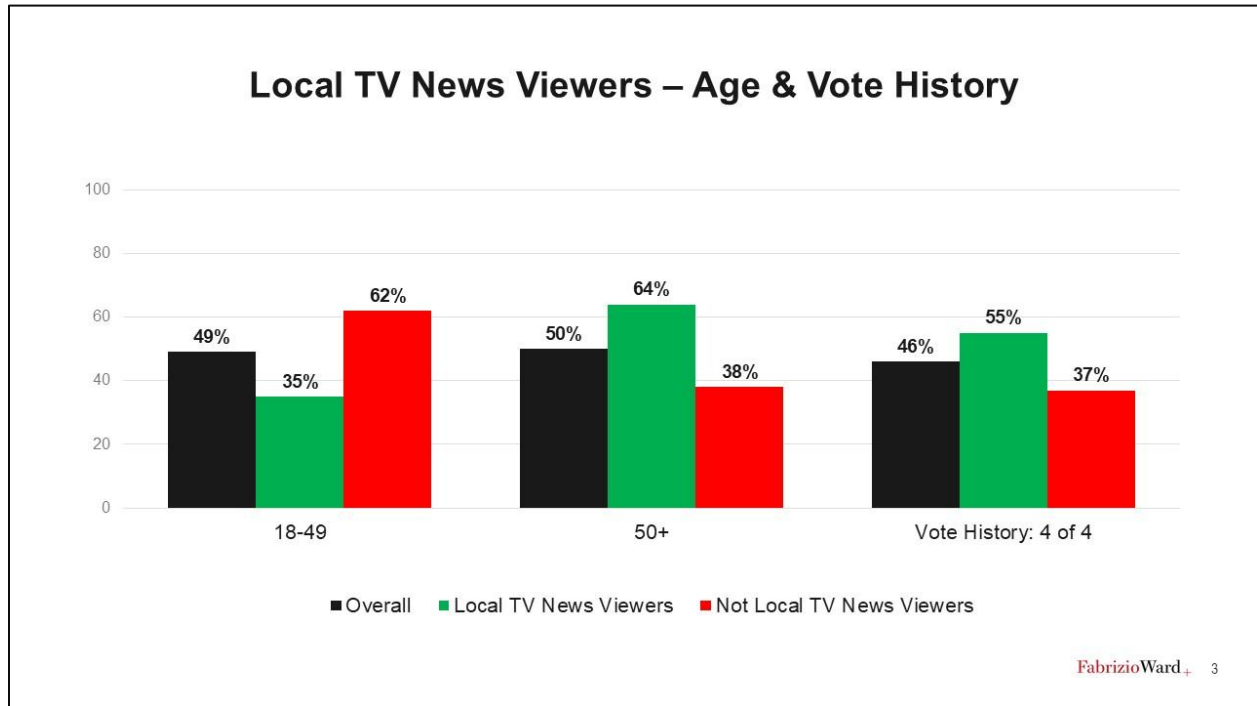


Chart 4

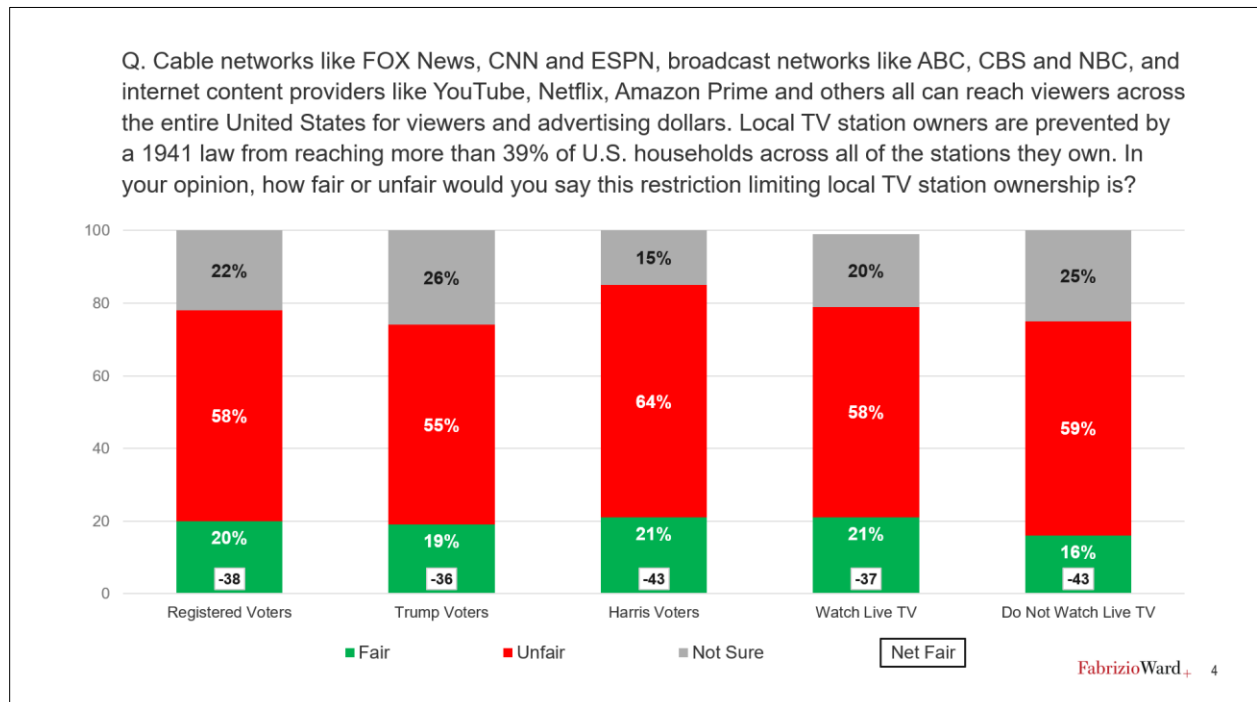


Chart 5

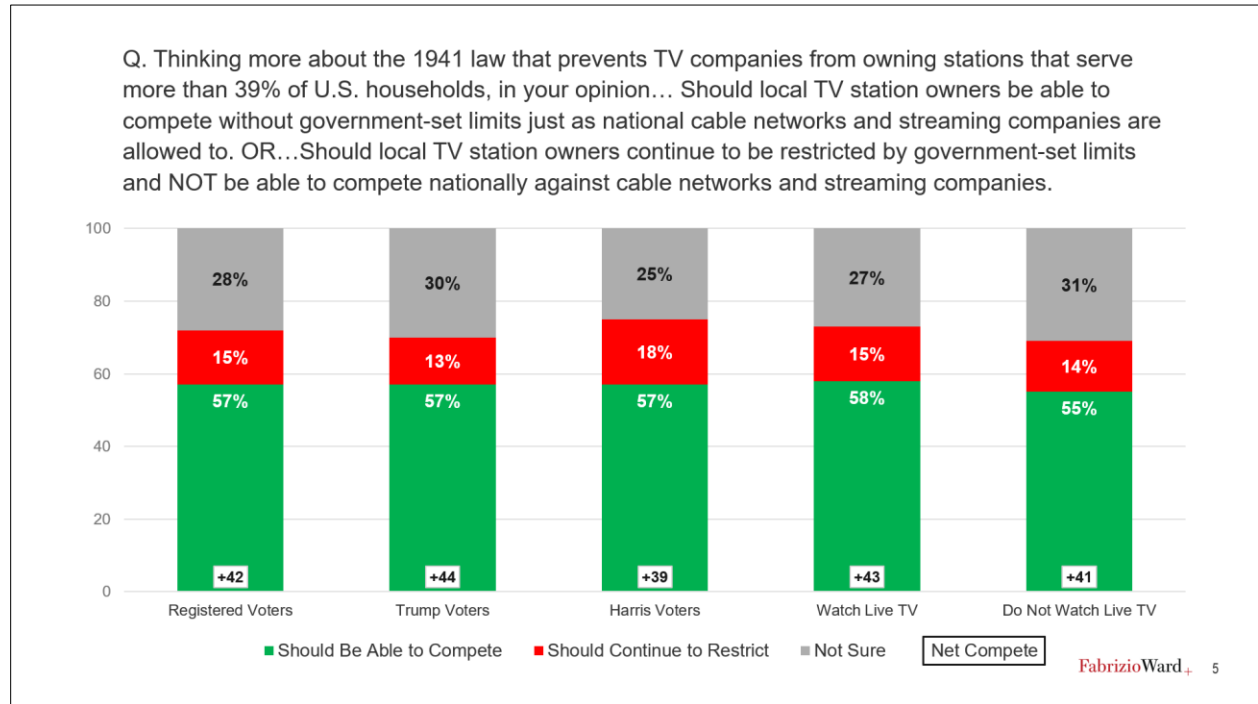


Chart 6

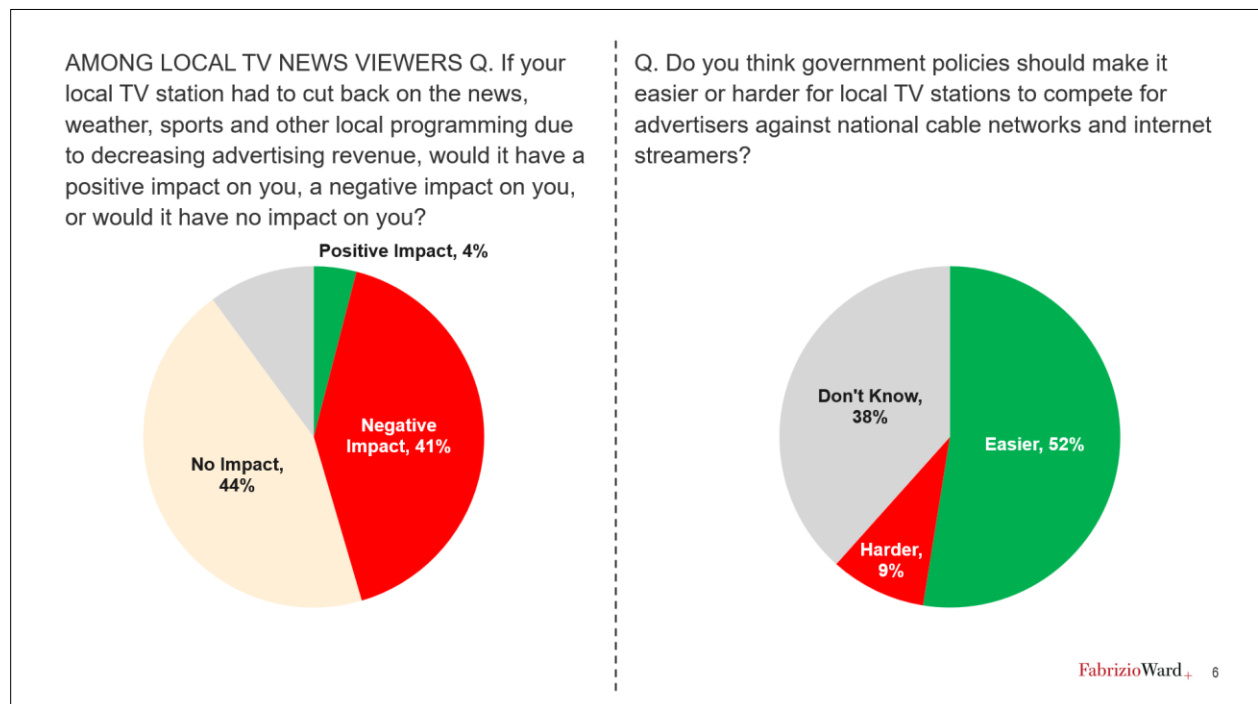
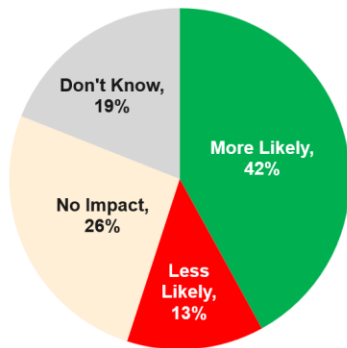


Chart 7

AMONG LOCAL TV NEWS VIEWERS Q. If your member of Congress SUPPORTED local TV station owners being allowed to compete nationally for advertising against cable networks and internet streamers, would you be more or less likely to vote for them?



AMONG LOCAL TV NEWS VIEWERS Q. If your member of Congress OPPOSED local TV station owners being allowed to compete nationally for advertising against cable networks and internet streamers, would you be more or less likely to vote for them?

