

	NEWS FROM		
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**Opening Statement by U. S. Rep. Bobby L. Rush**  
at the  
**Field Hearing of the House Subcommittee on Communications,  
Technology and the Internet**  
on  
**“Comcast and NBC Universal: Who Benefits?”**  
Chicago – July 8, 2010

CHICAGO — “Thank you, Chairman Boucher. Good morning, Chicago. And good morning, to each of our witnesses.

“On *that* day, *should* Comcast and NBC-Universal secure their *last* approval from federal and state regulators to combine their highly attractive, and lucrative, distribution and video programming assets, a very *powerful* and *influential* media and information colossus will be born. If that day comes, this combined entity will have the immediate power to determine *what* our nation watches, *what* we read, *from where* we get our news and, even, *on which* electronic and communications devices those images and data will appear.

“The \$28 billion joint venture between Comcast and NBC-Universal would give Comcast, already the country’s largest cable and home broadband company, *total say and control* over the day-to-day operations of the NBC network; the Telemundo network; NBC’s *two dozen* national cable

– more –

network channels—including MSNBC, Bravo and CNBC—and partial interests in the Weather Channel, A&E’s History and Biography channels; NBC Network News, “The Today Show,” “NBC Sunday Night Football,” “Meet the Press,” and distribution rights to a library of more than 55,000 TV episodes, not to mention the Universal Pictures movie studio and distribution companies.

“Many of the purported benefits of this proposed combination have been framed in terms of *when* and *where* subscribers will realize benefits. Some of the more widely touted subscriber benefits, put forward by the two parties, are that Comcast cable TV subscribers will be able to see movies more quickly after the first showings in theaters, *or* that because of this transaction, TV shows will appear faster on subscribers’ cell phones, video-on-demand web sites and other digital media platforms and devices.

“These ‘whens’ and ‘wheres’ are *absolutely* important. However, I am *equally* concerned about *what* cable television, broadcast TV, news, public affairs, religious and community programs, sporting events and movie content that will *not* be made available to subscribers of Comcast’s competitors, or to the competitors of Comcast’s new affiliates.

“And, will the same content that is offered to Comcast broadband subscribers, also be made available to *all* broadband users, regardless of *whom* they subscribe to for broadband service?

“Despite the critical importance of program access and the equitable carriage of network affiliates on Comcast’s cable systems, the most important issue of access, as far as I am concerned, is minority ownership.

“I am cognizant of the commitments that Comcast made publicly, last month, towards increasing diversity of ownership and diversity in programming. Specifically, Comcast’s commitments to distribute six cable network channels (over the next three years) and to see that half of those

channels are minority-owned or run represents an important and positive, *initial* step forward towards increased minority ownership.

“But these commitments do not go far enough.

“Minority owners and investors must have better seats at the board room table, *not just* in the movie theaters wearing 3-D glasses or holding set-top box remote controls in their living rooms.

“If this merger is truly going to be in the public interest, Comcast and NBC-Universal will have to do more, *for and with* minorities than what they have offered to do to date. Simply put, the economic stakes are high and we, as legislators, would be negligent on behalf of all taxpayers and others whom we represent if we fail to shine a bright light of openness and full disclosure on how Comcast and NBC, on the one hand, secure regulatory support for their own corporate interests without ensuring that their interests are *not the only ones* served by this transaction.

“I look forward to hearing the testimony of the witnesses. I hope that our hearing will assist me, and others, in learning more about how minority owners of communications, media, and technology companies, minority holders of FCC licenses, minority investors, and non-minority investors willing to invest in minority-owned companies and start-ups can play a bigger role as *owners* in this mammoth transaction and in the economic opportunities that lie ahead.

“Indeed, more room must be made for these entrepreneurs, investors, and business professionals to provide Comcast’s 24 million cable subscribers—about two million of whom are right here in the Chicago metropolitan area—and its 15 million high-speed Internet customers with high quality services, diverse perspectives and “know-how.”

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time you’ve accorded to me today. With that, I yield back the balance of my time.”