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Caucus for Producers, Writers & Directors Calls for Carve Out as a Condition of NBC/Comcast Merger

(Washington, DC) The Caucus for Producers, Writers & Directors, an organization of independent creators whose members include some of the most respected names in television, filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission calling for a 25% carve out of the domestic cable and free broadcast primetime schedule for independent production as a condition of approving the proposed merger of Comcast and NBC.

The proposed merger would bring together a distributor of programming in Comcast with a producer and owner of programming in NBC. With their filing arguing for conditions on the merger, the Caucus joins a growing number of individuals and advocates expressing concerns about the effect of such a merger.

“The relentless march of consolidation, of which this is the most recent example, threatens both the marketplace of ideas and livelihoods of the small business owners who make up the vast majority of independent production community,” said Peter Loge, a spokesman for the Caucus. “The demise of financial interest and syndication rules that limited networks’ financial interest in programming and acquisition of distribution rights has led to decline of the quality of programming and the demise of small businesses that produce independent content for network television,” Loge added.

The Caucus writes in their filing: “The few companies that control most of the production and distribution of content have an incentive to prevent competition and produce content that is easily distributed across a variety of platforms and that is easily repurposed – even at the expense of quality and diversity. The losers in this effort are viewers and independent producers. The fewer producers and distributors of content there are the harder it is for small businesses and entrepreneurs to bring new ideas to the marketplace.”

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