



The Daily Dish

# Trump, the FCC, and the News Distortion Rules

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | OCTOBER 11, 2024

*The Hill* reports:

The chair of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is forcefully pushing back on calls from former President Trump to punish broadcast networks that he says are not fair to him. “While repeated attacks against broadcast stations by the former President may now be familiar, these threats against free speech are serious and should not be ignored,” FCC Chair [Jessica Rosenworcel](#) said Thursday.

Indeed, on his Truth Social platform, Trump has [argued](#) that both ABC and CBS should “lose their license” over the unfair way he has been treated.

Now, one could dismiss this as the empty whining of a self-absorbed narcissist who should just grow up and understand that nobody on the right ever gets a fair shake from the mainstream media because, well, that’s what it is. But, the plot thickens! AAF’s Jeff Westling was way ahead of this story (no surprise) and in his recent [insight](#) points out that:

...it is indeed possible for the federal government to revoke a broadcast license, even in response to what is essentially a political offense. The Federal Communications Commission currently prohibits broadcasters from [intentionally distorting the news](#), and imposes a wide variety of other content-based restrictions, such as limits on the broadcasting of profanity or specifically requiring children’s television programming.

But should the FCC be able to do that? After all, it cannot impose restrictions on newspapers, streaming services, websites, social media (including Trump’s Truth Social), or a wide variety of other sources of news. Attempting to do so would be an unconstitutional infringement of free speech. This presents a highly unlevel playing field for competition in delivering news, something that one would typically attempt to avoid.