

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Upon learning about the Federal Communications Commission’s decision to ease media ownership rules, Representative Xavier Becerra (CA – 31), the chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus’s Telecommunications and Technology Task Force, issued the following statement:

“As the steward of our nation’s public airwaves, the Federal Communications Commission needs to responsibly safeguard diversity and act in ways that allow for a full expression of views. The decision rendered on June 2 fails to adhere to this mission and is a grave mistake that will lead to a homogenized American media market.

“ Much was overlooked in this rush to rewrite the rules. There is already a dramatic underestimation of Spanish television and radio audiences, which discourages new advertisers from trying to reach an important segment of the population. While Hispanics represent about 13 percent of the U.S. population in aggregate, America’s leading advertisers allocated an average of only 2.4 percent of their measured media advertising resources to target Hispanics over the past three years. This is grossly unfair, and will only get worse by the new FCC guidelines. This decision also will close the doors of opportunity for minorities to enter the broadcasting industry.

“Equally unfortunate through all this has been the minimal to non-existent network coverage given to this important issue. A study by the Project for Excellence in Journalism and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that over 70 percent of the American people have not heard anything at all about the FCC’s proposal to relax broadcast ownership rules. Only now, after a decision has been made, are people beginning to hear and understand.

“The core of the problem is not what we will see, hear and read, but what we will not be able to see, hear and read. My Democratic colleagues in Congress and I will continue to fight for legislative ways to turn back this decision and create rules that are fair and all encompassing.”