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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2215**

March 28, 2005

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Mr. Les Moonves  
Co-President and Co-Chief Operating Officer, Viacom  
Chairman, CBS Networks  
1515 Broadway  
New York, New York 10036

Dear Mr. Moonves:

With Opening Day a week away, I write to express the frustration of millions of Detroit Tigers fans who spent their winter looking forward to watching a much-improved Tigers team on free, over-the-air television.

For the past ten seasons, WKBD Channel 50, a Viacom-owned UPN affiliate, aired about two dozen Tiger games a year for the benefit of an eager local television viewing audience. According to recent press reports, Channel 50 and the Detroit Tigers were unable to come to an agreement that would allow Tigers games to be broadcast over the public airwaves. While I am sure there are two sides to the story with regard to the Tigers and those negotiations, I am concerned for the baseball fans of Southeast Michigan. Their taxes helped fund construction of Comerica Park, but now they will have to pay for tickets or cable service if they want to watch Tigers baseball.

Last season, Major League Baseball franchises broadcast an average of 38 games per team over broadcast television. I find it discouraging that even before the first pitch is thrown, the Tigers will be at the bottom of the list in a statistic that fans certainly care about. I'm disappointed the fans that have shown their devotion to this team for decades will not get the chance to see at least some games for free over the public airwaves.

This matter has given me pause to consider how Viacom, as a steward of the public airwaves, is demonstrating its commitment to air programming that is responsive to the needs and interests of Southeast Michigan. In the Detroit market, Viacom owns two broadcast stations, WKBD and WWJ-TV. This creates a duopoly, and, regrettably, it's a duopoly that largely excludes the local content many Americans rely on their over-the-air broadcast stations to provide. The Detroit Metropolitan Area is the tenth largest media market in the country, and neither of Viacom's two Detroit stations provides daily local news coverage.

Localism has always been a cornerstone of the American system of broadcasting. I am curious to know how Viacom addresses the local needs of the Detroit market. Specifically, I would like to know:

- 1) How WKBD and WWJ-TV identify issues of importance to Southeast Michigan residents for program-planning purposes?
- 2) Which programming provided by WKBD and WWJ-TV is responsive to the unique needs and interests of the Detroit community? Specifically include any locally-originated public affairs programming, weather and news reports, and coverage of community events.

I look forward to understanding the steps Viacom takes to ensure a strong Detroit community presence both on and off the air. The Tigers have taken dramatic steps to upgrade their squad and put a competitive team into Comerica Park this season. They have shown their commitment to metro Detroit. I wish to know how Viacom is stepping up to the plate and showing a similar devotion to Detroit.

With every good wish,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Dingell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "D".

John D. Dingell  
Member of Congress