

Myth vs. Fact: How Big Broadcast Mergers Raise Consumer Costs and Reduce Local News

Fact Checking NAB's Senate Commerce Committee Testimony

The U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation held a hearing on February 10, 2026, titled [“We Interrupt This Program: Media Ownership in the Digital Age,”](#) to examine whether the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) 39% national broadcast ownership cap should be revisited. Among those providing testimony was Curtis LeGeyt, president and CEO of the National Association of Broadcasters.

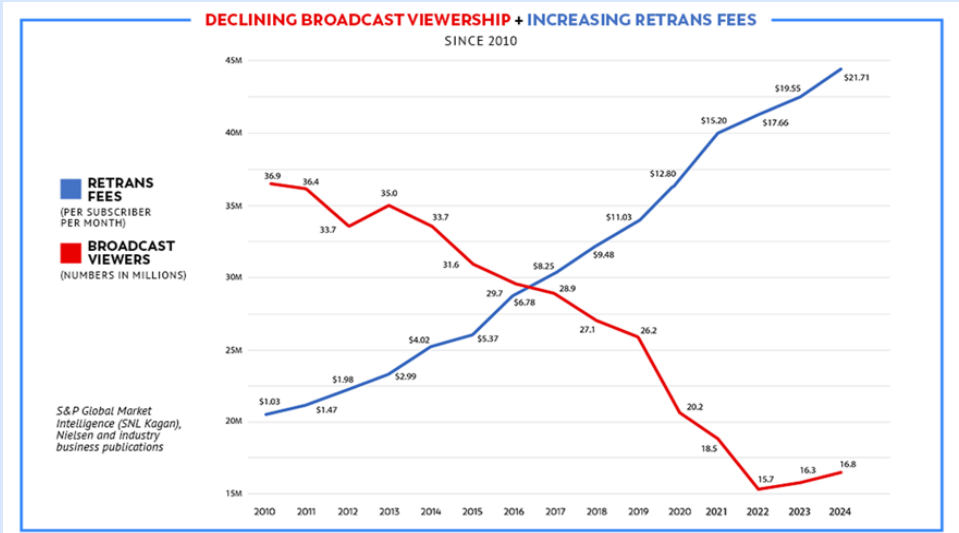
MYTH

“Over the last three years, industry-wide retransmission consent revenues have actually decreased year over year.” –Curtis LeGeyt

FACT

Even if cord-cutting reduces aggregate industry revenue, the bill for remaining subscribers keeps climbing.

- **Retrans fees grew 23% per subscriber (2022-2024)** – from \$17.66/month to \$21.71/month.
- Since 2010, retrans fees for “free” broadcast channels have increased by **more than 2,000% per subscriber.**
- Per-subscriber costs are rising approximately **15% per year.**
- Nexstar charges the **highest monthly retrans fees in the industry¹** – **and projects continued growth in 2026.²**



MYTH

“Nexstar does not have market power... No broadcaster has market power in this media landscape.” –Curtis LeGeyt

If an industry can raise prices **15% year after year**, negotiate “favorable terms,” and leverage unmatched scale — that is market power. Nexstar’s own CEO describes the company’s market power.

Perry Sook, Nexstar CEO:³

- “Tremendous progress... on favorable terms.”
- “A testament to the power of our content, scale and strategy.”
- “The largest owner of local broadcast television stations...”
- “Unmatched competitive attributes... financial strength and operating leverage...”

MYTH

"More than half of local broadcast newsrooms ... are not profitable."
-Curtis LeGeyt

FACT

Claims of widespread unprofitability are difficult to reconcile with **billion-dollar profits and long-term revenue stability projections**. The largest broadcasters are highly profitable, by their own reporting.

- Nexstar generated a projected **\$1.5 billion profit** last year.⁴
- NAB's own study states local broadcast stations generate nearly **\$34 billion in economic output**.
- NAB projects revenues to remain **"very stable" through 2028**.⁵

MYTH

Consolidation "means more local news, and it means more local journalists."
-Curtis LeGeyt

FACT

Recent **consolidation has meant job cuts and newsroom consolidation** – not the opposite.

- After acquiring Tribune Media in 2019, **Nexstar cut 23% of its workforce** within one year.⁶
- In duopoly markets, Nexstar consolidates news operations – combining websites, leadership, content and on-air talent.⁷ **The result:** less competition, less local news and fewer local journalists.
- Nexstar has identified 35 overlapping TEGNA markets where it plans to **"operate two stations off of one infrastructure,"** and Nexstar's CFO confirmed a **"line by line, person by person"** review to identify post-merger reductions.⁸

MYTH

"Nothing that we are advocating for in terms of eliminating these decades-old restrictions will change (the FCC's) authority to review transactions on a case-by-case basis."
-Curtis LeGeyt

FACT

Recent FCC decisions suggest otherwise. If ownership limits are weakened, **retransmission impacts may receive even less scrutiny**.

- NAB argues that bright-line ownership rules are unnecessary because the FCC can evaluate mergers individually. Yet the FCC's Media Bureau recently approved seven Sinclair transactions while stating it would **not** review retransmission consent impacts in mergers that do not violate existing ownership caps.⁹

Sources:

¹ Justin Nelson, Retransmission-Per-Subscriber Rates Continue To Climb in Q2 2025, S&P Global Market Intelligence (Sept. 24, 2025).

² Nexstar Media Group, Inc. Presentation at UBS Global Media and Communications Conference (Dec. 8, 2025).

³ Nexstar Q3 2024 Earnings Call (8/9/24) and Q4 2024 Earnings Call (2/27/25).

⁴ Nexstar reported \$1.128B of Adjusted EBITDA from Jan–Sept 2025 and guided to \$1.5–1.595B full-year Adjusted EBITDA.

⁵ <https://www.wearebroadcasters.com/documents/2025-NAB-Woods-Pooles-Local-Broadcasting-Publication.pdf>; see also <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/1231720510669/1> (ii–iii) (Nexstar quotes).

⁶ Analysis of Nexstar's annual SEC financial reports.

⁷ <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/10126512717971/1>. (21, App. E).

⁸ UBS Global Media and Communications Conference, Dec. 8, 2025 (Lee Ann Gliha, CFO).

⁹ <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-26-108A1.pdf>. (9).