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Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Room TW-A325
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May 19th 2018

To whom it may concern,

It has been brought to our attention that as of 23rd March 2018 Shaw University announced the sale of 88.9 WSHA to Education Media Foundation (EMF).

We the undersigned represent the Community Advisory Board (CAB) for 88.9 WSHA (http://www.shawu.edu/WSHA/home/Advisory_Board.aspx) and we would like to bring to the attention of the FCC several facts that may be pertinent in any decision making relevant to this sale.

The CAB was not consulted with or notified prior to the announcement of the sale which was made at the University Board in secret. It is our intention to oppose this decision which was not made in the best interests of the University or the Raleigh community.

It is well known that 88.9 WSHA has served the community of Raleigh for 50 years and is wholly owned by Shaw University which is the first historically black university in the southern United States. Shaw is a private liberal arts institution and claims many firsts including the first four-year medical school, first institution of higher learning for freedmen after the civil war, the first historically Black College to open its doors to women and of course the first HBCU to have its own radio station.

It has not been lost on us in the year that they should be celebrating its 50th Anniversary and the many achievements of this radio station they wish to sell it. Shaw like many HBCU's is having a difficult time financially and so WSHA represents an asset it can readily monetize. However, it is unclear who will benefit from this short-term decision and in the long term the effects on the Raleigh community and the network of groups benefiting that will have a public resource taken away, has not been adequately assessed. The Board of Shaw made a hasty and ill formed decision without consulting the community, their constituents or the CAB.

We offer that the EMF wishes to provide a contemporary Christian Station, however it is well known that this same organization owns K-Love (94.3 W232CH Raleigh and 101.9 W270AW Sanford fed via iHeartMedia's 93.9 WNCB-HD3). We believe the sale of WSHA would hence represent a monopoly by EMF of Contemporary Christian programming in this city. This in and of itself is highly unreasonable and unacceptable. Why should there be programming of a solely Christian flavor in Raleigh whereas 88.9 WSHA plays music that addresses the constituents who belong to many religions present in the area and is not limited to Christian music?

We also suggest that EMF will not provide the underserved and minority community of Raleigh with any of the benefits that WSHA currently does. Namely community programming by elected city and state officials e.g. 1. A monthly program featuring John Stein, the Attorney General of North Carolina, his staff and constituents. 2. A monthly program featuring Chief of Police, Cassandra Deck-Brown, sworn police officers and civilian employees. 3. A monthly program that provides listeners with direct access to the Commissioner for Labor, **Commissioner Cherie Berry** 4. A monthly program featuring North Carolina Secretary of State Elaine Marshall and her staff. 5. A monthly program featuring North Carolina State Auditor Beth Wood and her staff. 6. A monthly program featuring North Carolina Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshall Mike Causey. These as well as many other community programs such as a monthly program featuring practicing attorneys John Eluwa and Brian Beverly give a voice for ordinary citizens and are extraordinary for a city like Raleigh.

There are no plans from Shaw University to provide alternatives to these community programs. There are no plans by EMF to provide any community programming. We posit that the sale of WSHA to EMF will leave a gaping chasm in our community. This is also unacceptable.

According to the Public Broadcasting Act, 1967, the mission of public broadcasting is to 'facilitate the development of, and ensure universal access to, non-commercial high-quality programming and telecommunications services.' Additionally, its purpose is to 'provide programs and services which inform, enlighten and enrich the public . . . especially programming that involves creative risks and that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, particularly children and minorities.' WSHA has and continues to fulfil this mission.

We understand that the FCC has the authority to deny this request for sale, and we hereby request this based on EMF's lack of serving minorities, the unserved and underserved communities. We do not consider that EMF even has diversity within its board, management, leadership, or its locations. We offer that surely a conglomerate of several hundred plus stations goes against the Public Broadcasting Act if it purchases a public station and immediately removes the programming and diversity which the Act demands? The FCC should also consider that the EMF based on the 2016 1099 Tax filing stated total revenue of \$175M, revenue less expenses (profit) of \$63M and total assets of \$521M. This is by no means a non-profit and has significant assets so this conglomerate is not an equal player in the public market. Should it therefore be considered a member of the commercial market because as it stands it's purchase of a public station like WSHA will leave no balance to the commercial stations because it is basically one of them too?

Further we offer that the programming offered by WSHA is historically and culturally important. This station plays music of many genre's that is an important part of our local African American legacy (namely Jazz, Blues, Gospel, Hip Hop, Funk, Soul, Reggae and other styles) of music that have permeated American culture for well over 100 years and continue to have lasting impact and tell diverse stories. WSHA offers the only radio station serving Raleigh with all these types of music. It would be a significant loss for the area to be absent the sounds that WSHA has played for 50 years. A period in which we have seen the continued struggle for civil rights and equality. Music brings people together regardless of color, religion and nationality it is as important today and perhaps more so, where we see increasing examples of racism and intolerance that takes us back to the images of over 50 years ago. Music has long been used as a cultural tool to spread a message of peace and American values. Jazz has long been used as one lever. One has to only consider Louis Armstrong and his All Stars, Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington, and others on their tours abroad behind the iron curtain and in areas where regimes were repressive. WSHA plays the music of these ambassadors and their modern-day heirs, such that once WSHA is gone there will be no station in this Raleigh area to provide it. This is unacceptable.

In the past decade we have seen a massive resurgence in the popularity of vinyl records. A type of media that was once considered outmoded and surpassed by CDs then MP3's and more recently streaming. Society is fickle. What was once out of fashion or unpopular becomes fashionable again. Radio serves an important role in that it may go in and out of fashion but it regardless reaches out to communities that may be far from urban centers likely poorer financially and of course you do not need a \$1000 phone to hear it. Relegating WSHA to streaming will make it inaccessible. WSHA provides important information, it also provides music that can be uplifting and hopeful. Music that tells stories about all issues in society and expresses ideas and feelings likely to inspire people. It offers something to all our communities, it may lift people out of a difficult situation while for others it offers an escape, a passion. The sale of WSHA will remove this from our cultural landscape forever and is unacceptable.

In all of this we must not lose sight that WSHA has achieved 50 years of continued operation with a tiny staff, countless volunteers as DJs, fundraisers and a supportive community that has helped it through hurricanes and equipment failure. WSHA now has its biggest challenge. It should in our humble opinion be looking forward to serving the Raleigh community for the next 50 years. EMF will erase all that has been built to date. The transmitter paid for by members of the listening community will be sold to EMF without the listener having their say. Our tower will no longer transmit music that represents the community and diversity in this area.

As some evidence of the remarkable support in this area it should be noted that the Shaw University Alumni and other members of the listening audience in Raleigh have signed a change.org petition (<https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-sale-of-shaw-university-radio-station-wsha>).

We hope for your attention in considering this matter for the benefit of the Raleigh community.

Yours sincerely

Sean Ekins PhD, DSc. Member of 88.9 WSHA CAB, CEO Collaborations Pharmaceuticals Inc., Raleigh.

DJ Tom Nevlud, Member of 88.9 WSHA CAB, Volunteer DJ at 88.9 WSHA CAB,

Ms. Janet Howard, Member of 88.9 WSHA CAB

Mr. David E. Sanders, Former Vice Chair of the WSHA Community Advisory Board (2012 - present?), US Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Engineer (retired)

Mr. Alfred "The Professor" Lovell, Member of 88.9 WSHA CAB, Volunteer DJ at 88.9 WSHA CAB,