

SHERROD BROWN  
OHIO

COMMITTEES:  
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HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 23, 2011

**1625**

The Honorable Julius Genachowski  
Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:


This holiday weekend, the Cincinnati Bengals and Cleveland Browns will play against one another in a highly anticipated rivalry game. Countless Ohioans are eagerly planning to gather with family and friends to watch this game, but will be deprived of the chance to watch the Bengals and the Browns on local television due to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) sports blackout rule. The FCC's blackout policies permit broadcasters to black out home games that are not sold out within 72 hours of the game in local television markets. Due to this rule, only one home game has been televised in Cincinnati and Dayton this entire season, despite the fact that the Bengals play in a stadium that cost Ohio taxpayers over \$450 million.

While I understand that the blackout rule was designed to help sell tickets, I believe that this rule should be reexamined. During these difficult times, families are struggling to make ends meet. The average cost of a ticket to an NFL game is nearly ten times the hourly minimum wage. As a result, attending any NFL game is simply cost prohibitive for many Ohioans. This problem will likely become worse as ticket costs increase.

Given these considerations, I urge you to allow public comment on the pending petition to end this rule. Our state's NFL teams have long served as a source of pride for many Ohioans, and I am deeply troubled that too many Ohioans will not be able to watch and root for their teams on local television. I ask you to revisit this rule and to allow the Americans who have been prevented from watching their teams play, the opportunity to publicly comment on the sports blackout rule.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator