

March 4, 2026

Dear Attorneys General:

The undersigned organizations, representing millions of Americans nationwide, urge you to expeditiously investigate, and as appropriate, use the full range of your legal authority to block Paramount Skydance Corp.'s pending acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery, Inc., which includes CNN and multiple other properties. California Attorney General Rob Bonta, for example, said he [will fully investigate](#) this mega-merger, reportedly valued at \$111 billion, while last week [11 state attorneys general wrote](#) to the U.S. Department of Justice with concerns about media consolidation. The combined corporate behemoth would likely result in higher consumer costs from anti-competitive consolidation, layoffs of American workers, and a sharp reduction in consumers' ability to access news and entertainment programming, streaming services, and other products. This merger also raises serious First Amendment concerns, given Skydance's recent acquisition of Paramount, including CBS News, which reportedly [began almost immediately](#) to censor journalists' news reporting to conform to President Donald Trump's preferred viewpoints.

Paramount's proposed acquisition of Warner Bros. presents crucial antitrust and consumer cost questions that merit a swift investigation and challenge from your offices. Following a [20% increase](#) in subscription prices for streaming video services in December 2025, and a price increase announced by the Paramount+ service just last month, the consolidation of two major streaming services creates more market power for the combined Paramount Warner Bros. entity to increase prices for consumers.

Additionally, if the acquisition moves forward, it would result in the consolidation of competing film studios, reducing the number of major film studios from five to four, creating a more concentrated market following Disney's 2019 acquisition of 20th Century Fox. This increase in market consolidation could violate Section 7 of the Clayton Act. The proposed Paramount Warner Bros. merger clearly violates several of the [2023 Federal Trade Commission and Department of Justice Merger Guidelines](#). For example, the Merger Guidelines make clear that mergers raise a presumption of illegality when they significantly increase concentration in an already concentrated market. This includes the fact that a combined Paramount Warner Bros. would have significant leverage over workers, from actors to writers to producers to creators, which would also [substantially lessen competition for labor](#). Finally, the combined entity would co-own CBS News and CNN, posing a substantial anti-competitive concern in the news media market.

Beyond significant antitrust concerns, Paramount's impending acquisition of Warner Bros.—and its subsidiary CNN—also presents enormous threats to free speech and the freedom of the press. Paramount's chairman and CEO, David Ellison, and his billionaire father, Larry Ellison, are close to the White House, and they already appear to have demonstrated an appetite to censor points of view they disagree with at media properties they own. After David Ellison

acquired CBS News, he installed conservative pundit Bari Weiss to run it. Weiss promptly [neutered stories](#) critical of the Trump administration, including forcing *60 Minutes*, one of the nation's most trusted investigative news programs, to [delay a segment](#) investigating the administration's deportation regime. Earlier, Paramount paid [\\$16 million](#) to settle a legally dubious lawsuit brought by President Trump and canceled CBS' the *Late Show*, the program of comedian and frequent Trump antagonist Stephen Colbert, just [two days after Ellison met](#) with Trump FCC Chair Brendan Carr, who continues to weaponize the powers of the FCC to [target Colbert specifically](#).

Nor is the threat of censorship at CNN merely idle speculation. News reports indicate that President Trump [met with David Ellison at the White House](#) twice amid Paramount's bid, which reportedly is being financed with [billions of dollars](#) from investment funds in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi. Days later, the Department of Justice [announced an investigation](#) into whether Paramount's chief competitor in the Warner Bros. deal, Netflix, was engaged in "anticompetitive practices." Ellison also attended the recent State of the Union address [as President Trump's guest](#). And, last December, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Ellison [promised Trump administration officials](#) that if his hostile takeover was successful, he would make sweeping changes to CNN.

President Trump has also publicly inserted himself into merger negotiations, reportedly suggesting he supported Paramount's acquisition bid because of the [Ellisons' political support for him](#). If the Paramount Warner Bros. merger is approved, two of America's most important news organizations—CNN and CBS News—will fall under the control of billionaires who are seemingly willing and able to suppress credible reporting, tamp out dissent, and slant national news to favor the administration.

We urge you to immediately investigate this merger and take any and all appropriate legal action. In the face of relentless corporate consolidation and rising prices, states have a critically important role to play in ensuring a competitive marketplace, even when federal antitrust regulators fail to act. For example, Washington state [sued to block](#) the Kroger-Albertsons merger in 2024 and won an injunction from a state court issued the same day as the federal court decision, demonstrating the ability of state attorneys general to protect workers and consumers from the negative effects of market concentration. At a time when the freedom of the press and access to fact-based news are being threatened in unprecedented ways—and the president's allies are consolidating huge swaths of the media and online ecosystem—this merger threatens to take our nation further down the path of autocratic regimes like Hungary and Russia. With President Trump having weaponized independent agencies and antitrust enforcers to do his political bidding, it is essential that states fill the void and aggressively protect consumers.

Sincerely,
Center for American Progress
American Economic Liberties Project
Democracy Defenders Fund

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
Center for Digital Democracy
Clean Elections Texas
Common Cause
Connecticut Citizen Action Group
Democracy Matters
Free Speech For People
Freedom of the Press Foundation
Future Film Coalition
Greenpeace USA
Groundwork Action
Indivisible
International Documentary Association
Kaze Design
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Media and Democracy Project
Money Out Voter In (MOVI)
National Action Network
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Organization for Women
The National Vote
Open Markets Institute
Public Citizen
Public Knowledge
Secure Elections Network

Deadline