Paramount/WBD merger conditions give the public “virtually nothing,” judge is told

Free speech and media advocacy groups urged a judge to block a California settlement with Paramount Skydance that would let the company finalize its $111 billion merger with Warner Bros. Discovery.

Twelve states led by California sued to block the deal in July and were able to delay it when US District Judge Araceli Martínez-Olguín ruled that Paramount combining with Warner Bros. would likely reduce competition substantially and violate antitrust laws. Despite that initial victory, California Attorney General Rob Bonta announced a settlement with Paramount earlier this week and the other states involved in the lawsuit signed on to the deal.

Martínez-Olguín must decide whether to approve the settlement. A coalition of free speech and media advocacy groups told the judge in a filing yesterday that the deal will give residents of the states that sued Paramount “virtually nothing.” The filing was submitted by the Committee for the First Amendment, Free Press, Freedom of the Press Foundation, Future Film Coalition, and International Documentary Association.

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