
Reproduced with permission from Daily Report for Executives, 133 DER, 7/13/17. Copyright © 2017 by The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. (800-372-1033) <http://www.bna.com>

Mergers and Acquisitions

Senator Seeks Meeting With Antitrust Nominee About AT&T-Time Warner

Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) formally requested a face-to-face meeting with the nominee to lead the Justice Department antitrust division following a report that White House advisers might use the review of AT&T Inc. and Time Warner Inc.'s merger as leverage against the news network CNN.

The request is the second from a Senate Democrat expressing concern about the independence of the Justice Department as it reviews the \$107 billion deal since the New York Times report. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) July 7 asked Attorney General Jeff Sessions to disclose any contacts between the White House and Justice Department regarding the proposed merger, stating political influence in antitrust enforcement is "unacceptable."

In a July 10 letter to the antitrust nominee, Makan Delrahim, Blumenthal said, "I believe a meeting is necessary for me and my colleagues to understand exactly how you plan to assure a completely independent decision and protect against interference with First Amendment freedoms and rights."

The AT&T-Time Warner tie-up would create a telecommunications and media giant. The merged company would own much of the programming it provides to subscribers of its wireless, internet, and pay-TV services.

CNN is owned by Time Warner, and President Donald Trump has targeted the news network throughout his campaign and the early months of his presidency.

Delrahim previously told senators he had "no conversations" with the president about the AT&T-Time Warner deal in written responses to questions following his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Delrahim has been approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee, but the full Senate has yet to vote on his confirmation.

Blumenthal told Reuters that Delrahim had not yet responded to the request as of July 12.

BY SHIRA STEIN

To contact the reporter on this story: Shira Stein in Washington at sstein@bna.com

To contact the editor on this story: Fawn Johnson in Washington at fjohnson@bna.com

The text of the letter is at <http://src.bna.com/qJc>