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From: Rep. Markey

MM93-48

4-2-96 3:56am p. 1 of 1

MAY 21 1996

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News from Ed Markey, COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
United States Congress, OFFICE OF SECRETARY, Massachusetts Seventh District

MMB
Child-TV
1677
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 2, 1996

CONTACT: David Moulton
(202) 225-2836

OVER 100 MEMBERS OF CONGRESS URGE FCC
TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF CHILDREN

WASHINGTON, DC -- Over 100 members of Congress today wrote to the five commissioners of the FCC urging them to adopt a clear, unambiguous 3-hour per week standard for children's educational television. The letter expresses concern that "the Commission may succumb to the pleas of some that 'quality', not 'quantity', be the only test" of a broadcasters' legal obligations under the Children's Television Act of 1990.

"We urge you to defend the rights of children in this rulemaking, and to reject arguments against setting a clear, unambiguous 3-hour threshold for broadcasters to meet in return for renewal of a license to use the public airwaves," the legislators said. Without such a standard, "unscrupulous broadcasters will rush in to undercut those who have worked to increase their commitment to children's educational programming. The result will be even less quality programming than we now have."

Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA), lead signatory of the letter and an author of the Children's Television Act of 1990, noted that "if we do not take this Act seriously, we are not taking the future of our children seriously. Broadcasters have 120 hours of programming per week to devote to maximizing advertising revenues. They also have a legal obligation to serve the educational needs of kids. What we are proposing with this letter is a '2.5% solution' -- set a minimum of three hours per week for maximizing the education of children. This is a bargain that any good broadcaster should be proud to strike."

The FCC has under consideration a proposed rule that would require that broadcasters meet or exceed a threshold of 3 hours per week of children's educational programming in order to qualify for renewal of a broadcast license. The FCC proposed this rule in April 1995 to strengthen enforcement of the Children's Television Act. Public interest groups, activists and educators found that broadcasters were getting their licenses renewed with little regard to the accuracy, quality or quantity of programming aired to meet the educational and informational needs of children. But intense pressure from broadcast interests has prevented its adoption. Instead, broadcasters are seeking a weaker rule that would allow renewal no matter how miniscule the commitment to children's educational programming.

#

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EDWARD J. MARKEY
7TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

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April 2, 1996

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman
The Honorable James Quello
The Honorable Susan Ness
The Honorable Rachele Chong
The Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioners:

We are writing in response to recent press reports that the FCC may, at the request of certain broadcasters, abandon its effort to increase the quantity of programming designed to educate our nation's children. This would be a very unfortunate outcome of your children's television rulemaking and open to further question what remains of the public interest in broadcasting licenses. We want the Commission to know how strongly we feel about this rulemaking. We are concerned that the passion and resources devoted to this issue by those with a commercial stake in the outcome is causing the Commission to lose its focus on the mission of effectively implementing the Children's Television Act (CTA) of 1990.

We are particularly concerned that the Commission may succumb to the pleas of some that "quality", not "quantity", be the only test of compliance with the CTA. It is unquestionably important to eliminate definitional ambiguity. Moreover, the Commission is correct to suggest that programming aired before 7 am should not qualify. But if the Commission gives up its attempt to specify a minimum amount necessary to guarantee renewal of a broadcast license, unscrupulous broadcasters will rush in to undercut those who have worked to increase their commitment to children's educational programming. The result will be even less quality programming than we now have.

And what we now have is clearly unacceptable. The Commission recognized this reality when it originally proposed a minimum of 3 hours per week of qualifying programming be used as a guide to compliance with the CTA. This is an extremely low standard, particularly when compared to the roughly 140 hours that a typical station airs during the week. Indeed, the National Association of Broadcasters believes that the average broadcaster already exceeds this minimum, and Westinghouse has pledged to meet or exceed this minimum on CBS. Sadly, the 3-hour standard is still several hours more than many broadcasters are currently airing despite the law.

We urge you to defend the rights of children in this rulemaking, and to reject arguments against setting a clear, unambiguous 3-hour threshold for all broadcasters to meet in return for renewal of a license to use the public airwaves. Most broadcasters will gladly meet this standard, and the public will be grateful that a minimum standard has finally been set.

Sincerely,

Edward Markel
Edward Markel

Anna G. Estro
ANNA G. ESTRO

Jim McDermott
JIM McDERMOTT

Gene Klink

Frank Pallone
FRANK PALLONE

Nancy Pelosi
NANCY PELOSI

Alice L. Hastings
ALICE L. HASTINGS

Eva M. Clayton
EVA M. CLAYTON

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CARRIE P. MEER

Zoe Lofgren
ZOE LOFGREN

Ron Klink

Barbara
BARBARA

Gerry Studds

Ed Markey
ED MARKEY

Rosa L. DeLauro

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~~Patsy T. Mink~~

~~Barbara Rose Collins~~

BARBARA ROSE COLLINS

~~Barbara Rose Collins~~ + duplicates

~~Lucile Raybal-Alford~~

LUCILE RAYBAL-ALFORD

~~Albert R. Lyman~~

ALBERT R. LYMAN

~~William Jefferson~~

WILLIAM JEFFERSON

~~Jim Chapman~~

JIM CHAPMAN

~~Melvin Watt~~

MELVIN WATT

~~Tom Lamb~~

TOM LAMBS

~~Bernard Sanders~~

BERNARD SANDERS

~~Bob Hefner~~

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~~Carolyn Maloney~~

CAROLYN MALONEY

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~~Ray Thornton~~

~~Ronald V. Dellums~~

RONALD V. DELLUMS

~~Tom Brvill~~

TOM BRVILL

~~John Lewis~~

JOHN LEWIS

Bill Richardson

[Handwritten signature]

Thomas Sawyer

[Handwritten signature]

NITA LOWRY

[Handwritten signature]

GARY ACKERMAN

[Handwritten signature]

JULIAN C. DIXON

[Handwritten signature]

ROBERT T. MATSUI

[Handwritten signature]

BUD CRAMER

[Handwritten signature]

DOUGLAS "PETE" PETERSON

[Handwritten signature]

Ed Pastor

SANFORD BISHOP, JR.
[Handwritten signature]

Ed PASTOR

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

EARL POMEROY

BARBARA KENNEDY

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[Handwritten signature]

CHARLES RANGEL

CHARLES SCHWARTZ

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LOYD DOPPELT

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

ESTEBAN TORRES

LEWIS BROWN

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

RONALD COLMAN

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

Vic Fazio

[Handwritten signature]

William H. CLAY

W H Clay

Jerry Blum ^{GERALD KIEZKA}

LYNN RIVERS

Lynn Rivers

Jim Moran ^{SIM MORAN}

Jim Moran

NORMAN DICKS

Norman Dick

HEROLD NADLER

Herold Nadler

Joe. Costello ^{JERRY COSTELLO}

BENJAMIN CARDIN

Ben Cardin

Chaka Fattah ^{CHAKA FATTAH}

Patrick Kennedy

Patrick Kennedy

David Skaggs ^{DAVID SKAGGS}

Pat Williams ^{PAT WILLIAMS}

Peter DeFazio ^{PETER DEFANZO}

Peter DeFazio

Don Durbin

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Eliot L. Engel

William Coyne ^{WILLIAM COYNE}

Tim Johnson ^{TIM JOHNSON}

Robert Roark

Robert C. Roark

~~Robert C. Roark~~

Chet Edwards ^{CHET EDWARDS}

Chet Edwards

duplicate

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Pat Arch



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MAY 21 1996

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20541

Commissioner James Quello
Federal Communication Commission
1919 M St. NW
Washington DC 20554

Dear: Commissioner James Quello

I have a growing concern about the children's programming and the amount of burden that is continuously placed on the broadcaster . The broadcaster has continued to rally to the commissions demand in children's programming and we have significantly increased children's education and information programming.

The playing field has been continuously decreased in size for the broadcaster and more and more demands are placed on its shoulders. The current FCC rules are working and to increase this programming and new rules are not needed.

Broadcasters understand the current definition of "educational and informational children's programming", which needs no change. I feel that the broadcaster accepts there responsibility very seriously .

When rules quantifying (quotas) the amount are unnecessary --- broadcasters are responding to the Act and the unquantified obligation in the current rules with more and better educational and informational programming for children.

Many short segment programming is important for kids and should get credit. The above directs me to strongly oppose the FCC docket number ,(MMDOCKET No.93-48)

Sincerely

Perley E. Eppley GM WFXL-TV

1211 NORTH SLAPPEY BOULEVARD
P.O. BOX 4050
ALBANY, GEORGIA 31706
912-435-3100
FAX 912-435-0485
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August 21, 1995

Commissioner James Quello
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RECEIVED
MAY 21 1995
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Re: MM Docket No 93-48
Proposed Rule Making
Children's Television Act

Dear Commissioner Quello:

I am a broadcaster by profession and a parent of five and grand parent of two by elective, so I deal with children's issues with experience from both perspectives.

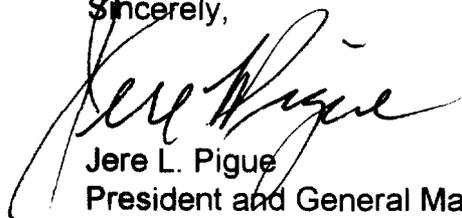
Broadcasters have significantly increased children's educational and informational programming on TV as a result of the Children's Television Act and current FCC rules. This increase is both quantitative and qualitative. And the improvement continues.

We DO understand the current definitions of educational and informational programming and are working hard to meet or exceed them. We do NOT need rules which impose numerical "quotas". We do NOT need "tightening" of the definitions. Broadcasters are both responsible and responsive to improving our children's programming under the current Act and with the unquantified obligation in the current rules.

I ask that you strongly oppose any change that will impose numerical "quotas" for children's educational and informational programming on our stations!

I ask that you strongly oppose changing current definitions of that programming!

Sincerely,


Jere L. Pigue
President and General Manager

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MAY 21 1995

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Commissioner James Quello
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: MM Docket No. 93-48

Dear Commissioner Quello:

The California Broadcasters Association is **very strongly opposed** to the proposed "tightening" of the Children's Television Act.

The primary reason new proposed rules are not needed is because we are happy to report broadcasters have **already significantly increased educational and informational programming**. Additionally, such programming is going to be increased even more.

Implementing a "quota" system flies in the face of the public's control of the airwaves through their needs and desires as consumers.

Also, short segment programming should get credit because it is:

1. Important
2. Has more impact because of a child's attention span

Broadcasters understand the importance of the Children's Television Act. That's why **we** are responding so well. The Children's Television Act will do the job if it is allowed to do so. **No further rules are needed.** Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dino Corbin
President

Stan Statham
Executive Director

0



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James L. DeSchepper
Vice President & General Manager



3135 Floyd Blvd.
Sioux City, IA 51105 (712) 239-4100

August 24, 1995

Commissioner James Quello
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Dear Commissioner Quello:

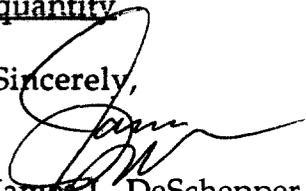
The Notice of Proposed Rule Making to adjust rules implementing the Children's Television Act as part of MM Docket No. 93-48 is distressing to this broadcaster for several reasons.

In response to FCC action KTIV-TV has significantly increased children's educational and informational programming. In addition to hundreds of hours of approved, syndicated programming, KTIV-TV air dozens of hours of local children's program under the *Four Siouxland's Children* campaign.

One of our on-going projects for children is to have groups plan, produce and air on KTIV-TV their own public service announcements. This projects takes hundreds of staff hours a year but we do not get credit as the announcements are not program length.

Rules quantifying the amount are unnecessary. Quality is the question, not quantity.

Sincerely,


James L. DeSchepper
Vice President & General Manager

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1716 Locust Street
Des Moines, IA 50309-3077
515-284-3717
FAX 515-284-2333

Philip A. Jones
President
Broadcast Group

August 24, 1995

Commissioner James Quello
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Jim: RE: MM Docket No. 93-48

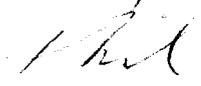
I strongly urge you to not put in place additional regulations in the children's programming area. We, Meredith Broadcasting, have three CBS Affiliates, two FOX Affiliates and one NBC Affiliate. We have always had a commitment to be responsible in our children's programming. We do that out of a sense of responsibility to our audience and their needs, not because of regulations.

The current FCC rules are working and as a matter of fact children's educational/informational programming has been on the increase. I'm sure broadcasters understand the desires of the commission and I see no reason why the rules should be changed.

I strongly oppose quotas for any form of programming. Quotas do not necessitate good programming nor does it cause the viewer to watch more of a particular format. This is particularly true as it applies to children. I've always felt the best way to deal with children's programming is through the creative process which is not as simple as stating that more is compelling to young children. I feel that a good way to reach children is through the short segment programming and broadcasters are doing a good job with vignettes that are in the educational/informational area for children.

Again, hopefully when you address MM Docket Number 93-48, you will determine that the present act is working and take no further action. Thanks for your consideration of this.

Best regards,


Philip A. Jones

cc Eddie Fritts
Jeff Baumann
Chuck Sherman

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Ret. Chairman, Sinclair Oil Corp.

EMMET E. TRACY

Chairman & President

Alma Products, Inc.

August 25, 1995

Hon. James Quello
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Quello:

We noticed that you voted against the Children's TV
Programming Requirements proposed by Mr. Hundt.

We are sure you had a good reason, but would like to
know what that was.

Sincerely,

Paul J. McGeady
General Counsel

PJM/tp

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

John P. Murray
1731 Humboldt Street
Manhattan, Kansas 66502

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MAY 21 1996
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

1 September 1995

Dear Commissioner Quello:

I am writing to urge your support for quantitative guidelines for children's educational television.

As a follow on to the resources and reports outlined in my letter of 3 July (copy attached), I am enclosing a 1993 report in which I suggest (on pages 16-17) the need for reform.

Thanks for your concern. Please call if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

John P. Murray

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3 July 1995

Commissioner James H. Quello
Federal Communications Commission
1919 "M" Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioner Quello:

I am enclosing a new report, *Children and Television Violence*, which was published in the current issue of the *Kansas Journal of Law & Public Policy*.

If you would like additional information on the topic of TV violence, you can visit our new world wide web site (<http://www.ksu.edu/humec/tele.htm>) devoted to this issue.

Finally, this law review commentary served as the basis for the development of a one-hour video program on television violence. The video was produced for the *Great Plains University Consortium* (Kansas State, Iowa State, North Dakota State, Oklahoma State, Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska) and will be part of a satellite telecourse, to be broadcast later this year. If you would like a free copy of the video, please send a message via voice-mail (1-500-FOR-JOHN) or e-mail (JPM@KSUVM.KSU.EDU).

Sincerely yours,

John P. Murray, Ph.D.
Professor and Director

JPM:reb

enclosure

Children & Television

Images in a Changing
Sociocultural World

GORDON L. BERRY
JOY KEIKO ASAMEN



SAGE Publications
International Educational and Professional Publisher
Newbury Park London New Delhi

1. The Developing Child in a Multimedia Society

JOHN P. MURRAY

To suggest that children growing up in the 1990s live in a very different world than the one their parents or grandparents experienced as children is not only to state the obvious but to *understate* the obvious. Although many of the parents of young children in this last decade of the 20th century grew up with television, some of these parents—and almost all of the grandparents—lived in a world without television as a source of information and entertainment.

There are, of course, other changes in the information environment in which children live today. The current media ecology of childhood includes computers and video games, VCRs and laser discs, and ever-changing audio systems with computer interfaces that *could* enhance the integration of both education and entertainment in a multimedia society. However, that integration has not yet occurred and its potential remains a matter of some conjecture. Still, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that television is one of the core components of a multimedia society that has dramatically altered the nature of childhood and the development of children.

The central role that television plays in a multimedia environment for children results from the fact that television—unlike all other media before or since—reaches children at a much earlier age and with a greater intensity. This enhanced potential for influencing the intellectual and emotional development of young viewers is simultaneously television's greatest promise and greatest disappointment. The history of these great expectations for television and the prospects for the future serve as the focus of this review of the developing child in a multimedia society.

Expectations

Television had its debut in North America in 1939 as an object of curiosity at a world's fair exhibition. During the half century since this official debut, television has contributed to major alterations in the life-styles and information environments of children. One of the first social commentators to offer a prediction on the impact of television was the essayist E. B. White, who previewed a demonstration of television in 1938. Writing in *Harper's Magazine* in that year, White noted:

I believe television is going to be the test of the modern world, and in this new opportunity to see beyond the range of our vision, we shall discover either a new and unbearable disturbance of the general peace or a saving radiance in the sky. We shall stand or fall by television—of that I am quite sure. (White, 1938, cited in Boyer, 1991, p. 79)

And so it was that television, at its birth, gave rise to premonitions of conflict over its potential for benefit or harm.

This concern about the positive and negative influences of television has driven most of the research and public discussion concerning the development of this medium and the development of children over the past half century. The official starting date for television broadcasting in the United States is July 1, 1941, when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licensed and approved the full operation of the first commercial television stations. However, the development of television broadcasting was limited by World War II and full-scale broadcasting did not resume until 1946, when stations were once again required to broadcast a minimum of 12 hours of programming each week, with a gradual increase in broadcasting up to a minimum of 28 hours weekly by the end of the first 3 years of the broadcasting license (Andreasen, 1990; Comstock, 1989).

Despite the slow start to television broadcasting, this medium was quickly adopted and it diffused through the population at an accelerated pace. For example, in 1945 there were about 10,000 television sets in use, but that figure jumped to about 7 million sets 5 years later in 1950. By 1955, almost 65% of U.S. households had at least one television set, and by 1960 that figure had jumped to 90% of U.S.

households. Currently, 98% of households have a TV, with only 2% of households choosing not to purchase a television set.

Similarly, the amount of time spent watching television has increased over the years from about 4.5 hours per day in 1950 to 7.5 hours each day in the 1980s and 1990s. To give some reference for this magnitude of viewing, if you multiply 7.5 hours per day in the typical household by the number of households with television sets in use, you find that in 1 year Americans collectively spend about 30 million years of human experience watching television. This is a considerable amount of time to spend with television each year, and one might reasonably ask what effect this extensive viewing has on U.S. society.

To give a flavor of the range and depth of concern about television, one might reflect on the observations of a former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Newton Minow, who is best remembered for his "inaugural address" to the National Association of Broadcasters in 1961 in which he said:

When television is good, nothing—not the theatre, not the magazines or newspapers—nothing is better. But when television is bad, nothing is worse. I invite you to sit down in front of your television set when your station goes on the air and stay there without a book, magazine, newspaper, profit-and-loss sheet, or rating book to distract you—and keep your eyes glued to that set until the station signs off. I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland. You will see a procession of game shows, violence, audience participation shows, formula comedies about totally unbelievable families, blood and thunder, mayhem, violence, sadism, murder, western bad men, western good men, private eyes, gangsters, more violence, and cartoons. And, endlessly, commercials—many screaming, cajoling, and offending.

Thirty years later, the now former chair of the FCC, speaking on the 30th anniversary of the "vast wasteland" speech, observed: "In 1961 I worried that my children would not benefit much from television, but in 1991, I worry that my grandchildren will actually be harmed by it" (Minow, 1991, p. 12).

The "vast wasteland" speech had a galvanizing effect on public discussion of the potential of television to influence young viewers for good or ill. Three decades later we are still attempting to sort out the costs and benefits of this medium of long-distance sight and

sound. The controversies continue to rage about the most beneficial uses of television in all its forms and the difficulties of drawing the fine line between commercial profit and commercial exploitation. For example, concerns have surfaced around proposals to provide commercial television news services in schools, such as those promoted by Whittle Communications's Channel One (Murray, 1991; Pool, 1992). And yet, there are clearly great benefits to be derived from the effective use of television as an educational force in the lives of young viewers (Boyer, 1991; Palmer, 1988). So, what do we know about television's influence on the developing child and when did we know it?

Debates

The first official debates about television occurred in congressional hearings during the early 1950s (U.S. Congress, House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, 1952; U.S. Congress, Senate Committee of the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, 1955). These inaugural congressional investigations were focused on the impact of televised violence on children and youth and set the stage for subsequent commissions and committees. For example, the landmark reviews following the 1950s hearings include the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Baker & Ball, 1969), the Surgeon General's report on television violence (U.S. Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, 1972), the report on television and behavior from the National Institute of Mental Health (1982; Pearl, Bouthilet, & Lazar, 1982), and the American Psychological Association review of television and society (Huston et al., 1992). Each of these investigations began with basic questions about the impact of television on young viewers and each has added incrementally to our understanding of the processes by which children develop in a mediated society.

Questions about the impact of television on children and adults have occupied the time and talents of hundreds of social scientists and educators over the past 40 years. Consequently, there have been over 4,000 books, articles, reports, and papers published on this topic since the mid-1950s (Huston et al., 1992; Murray, 1980). The major concerns expressed about television have been focused on its impact

on young viewers in relation to the influence of televised violence, the portrayal of the roles of men and women and various social and ethnic groups, and the influence of television viewing on school performance and general intellectual and emotional development in children.

Violence

As we noted earlier, one of the first concerns that surfaced in relation to the medium of television in the 1950s was a concern about the impact of televised violence on the behavior of young viewers. This was the principal focus of the congressional hearings in 1952 and 1955 and continued to be an issue in the violence commission in 1969, the Surgeon General's report in 1972, and in various other reports through 1992. The reasons for concern about violence, both then and now, include the fact that there has been a consistently high level of violence on television throughout much of its history and that children are considered more vulnerable to these violent portrayals because they are in the early stages of developing behavior patterns, attitudes, and values about social interaction. However, this is not to deny that many reports and studies have addressed the impact of televised violence on adults as well as children for many of the same reasons. The earliest studies in this regard turned on the work of Albert Bandura who studied preschool children at Stanford University (Bandura, D. Ross, & S. Ross, 1961) and the work of Leonard Berkowitz at the University of Wisconsin, conducting studies on the impact of film violence on college students (Berkowitz, 1962). These early laboratory-based and relatively focused investigations gave rise to the conclusion that media violence could lead to some short term changes in aggressive behavior and attitudes on the part of children and young adults.

Subsequent studies and reviews, such as the work of Aletha Huston and her colleagues (Friedrich-Cofer & Huston, 1986; Stein & Friedrich, 1972) expanded these studies and conclusions to take account of aggressive behavior occurring in more conventional or typical behavior settings. For example, one study conducted in the early 1970s (Stein & Friedrich, 1972) assessed the effects of viewing a diet of Batman and Superman cartoons on the aggressive behavior of preschoolers in the more natural setting of their classroom and playgrounds. One of the main conclusions from this study is that the

youngsters who had watched the Batman and Superman cartoons were much more likely to get into minor confrontations in the classroom and on the playground, were more active in these settings, and played less well and less cooperatively with their peers. On the other hand, the youngsters who had watched the diet of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* were more likely to play cooperatively, offer to help other children and teachers, share toys and equipment, and express concern about others' emotional well-being. One of the interesting features of this research is the suggestion that television can have either beneficial or harmful effects on viewers' behavior and that the nature of the effects depends upon the nature of the programming viewed. To be sure, there are many other factors that affect these relationships and there has been considerable debate about the nature of these influences and the extent of concern about televised violence (Comstock & Paik, 1991; Donnerstein, Linz, & Penrod, 1987; Freedman, 1984, 1986; Friedrich-Cofer & Huston, 1986; Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Huston et al., 1992; Murray, 1980; National Institute of Mental Health, 1982; U.S. Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, 1972). Nevertheless, it is clear that there is a considerable amount of violence on television and that this violence on the small screen may translate into changes of attitudes, values, or behavior on the part of heavy viewers. For example, studies by George Gerbner and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania (Gerbner & Signorielli, 1990) have shown that on average over the past 20 years, 1 hour of "prime-time" evening television programming contains 5 violent acts whereas 1 hour of Saturday morning children's programming contains an average of 20-25 violent acts. These figures and levels of violence have fluctuated somewhat over the past quarter of a century of detailed content analyses, but the average child watching an average amount of television will see about 20,000 murders and 80,000 assaults in his or her formative years. That's about 100,000 violent acts before a youngster becomes a teenager. Some of the violence will be seen on realistic programs and some will be seen on cartoons, but we know from various studies that all forms of violent programming may have possible harmful effects on viewers.

Three possible effects have been the focus of most concern about TV violence: Children may become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others; youngsters may be more fearful of the world around them; and children may be more willing to behave in aggres-

sive or harmful ways toward others. Although the effects of television violence are not simple and straightforward, meta-analyses and reviews of a large body of research (Huston et al., 1992; Wood, Wong, & Chachere, 1991) suggest that there are clearly reasons for concern and caution in relation to the impact of televised violence.

Roles

Content analyses of television programming over the past 20-30 years have consistently indicated that the portrayal of the roles of men and women and various social or ethnic groups bear little relationship to the life circumstances of these individuals beyond the small screen (Berry, 1988; Gerbner & Signorielli, 1990; Greenberg, 1980; M. Williams & Condry, 1989; Withey & Abeles, 1980). Although the portrayal of ethnic minorities and the roles of men and women have changed over the years as a result of increasing sensitivity to these issues on the part of both broadcasters and viewers, there remain clear limitations on opportunities for diverse role presentations for these groups. For example, following civil rights demonstrations during the 1960s, there were increases in the number of programs featuring Blacks in major roles on television. However, this trend began to reverse in the 1980s, when Blacks declined to about 8%, which is considerably below the percentage of Blacks in the U.S. population. So too, there were clear limitations on other ethnic groups. For example, Hispanics (3.5%), Asians (2.5%), and Native Americans (under 1%) (Berry, 1980; Greenberg, 1986).

In other areas, such as the portrayal of families on television, we know that there have been wide variations in the nature of families that dominate television at various periods in its history. One recent content analysis of over 900 television series broadcast between 1947 and 1992 suggest that there are some unusual peaks in particular types of families on televisions (Murray, 1992). For example, in the early days of television—from the late 1940s through the 1950s—the typical family consisted of one of two types: A mother and father with two or three children or husband and wife who were newlyweds just establishing their marriage and family relationships. However, in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, there was a sudden rise in the number of single-parent families portrayed on television. One might suspect that this was a response to a rising divorce rate in the United States and the consequent increase in single-parent

families. In the U.S. population during the 1960s and 1970s, and continuing through today, most of the single-parent households are female headed. However, on television during the 1960s and 1970s, most of the single-parent households were male headed. Moreover, this overrepresentation of male-headed households continues through the 1980s and 1990s. The reasons for this odd circumstance are difficult to detect, but they seem to derive from an expedient formula in entertainment television. Nevertheless, it would be helpful to encourage broader representation of the diverse structures of families on television, because we know that young viewers are affected by the families they see on the small screen (Dorr, Kovacic, & Doubleday, 1990).

Clearly, it is important to think about the ways in which various social roles and groups are portrayed on television, because they can have an important influence in shaping children's views of the world. Consider, for example, the role of police officers on television and children's conceptions of police officers. On the small screen, most police officers are seen in highly active, violent situations: shootings, beatings, high-speed chases. If you ask children about their understanding of what police officers do, you will find that most young children readily report that police officers chase people and arrest them and shoot guns and drive fast cars. On the other hand, if you ask police officers on urban or rural police forces, you will find that most of their daily activities consist of filling out forms and writing reports. Indeed, many career veterans of police departments around the country report that they have rarely or never fired their guns at lawbreakers.

Education

One of the strongly held beliefs about television is the notion that it is simply designed for entertainment. And yet, when viewers are asked about how they use television—how often they view, what they view, and why they view—they frequently demonstrate that they use television for many purposes beyond mere entertainment. For example, studies of audience members in the context of "uses and gratifications" theory (Murray & Kippax, 1979) have shown that some viewers use television in a very thoughtful and directive manner. Individuals who report that they watch television to keep abreast of current events do, in fact, watch more news, documentaries, and

current affairs programs. Conversely, those who watch large amounts of television often report that they use television to "escape the boredom of everyday life" or to relax and to be entertained and, indeed, watch a wide variety of television programs with no particular preferences evident in their viewing patterns.

With regard to the direct contributions of television to education and intellectual development in children, the pattern is somewhat mixed. We know that television is a window on the world; that programming can take viewers to places they might never see and offer experiences they might never feel or encounter in their daily life. With regard to children, we know that television is indeed a "special medium for a special audience" because it transcends the boundaries of time and space (Dorr, 1986). In addition, particular programs have been shown to have very special beneficial effects. One need only think of *Sesame Street* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* to tap into a large body of research on the effectiveness of planned, carefully designed programming (Comstock & Paik, 1991; Dorr, 1986; Huston et al., 1992; Murray, 1980). On a more anecdotal level, it has been reported that programs such as *Reading Rainbow* have stimulated intense interest in the books featured on the programs, and an episode of *Happy Days* in which the Fonz acquired a library card prompted a rush on libraries (Charren & Sandler, 1983; Comstock, 1989; Huston et al., 1992).

On the other hand, television has been identified as a hindrance to education in the sense that television viewing is an activity that may "steal" time from other activities more directly related to success in school. For example, studies of the introduction of television in a small Canadian community have shown that television availability is associated with a decrease in reading ability or reading skills components (T. M. Williams, 1986). However, the evidence from other studies is somewhat mixed (Anderson & Collins, 1988; Bryant & Anderson, 1983). We do know that the outlook is not as bleak as Winn (1987) might believe, but it seems clear that we have not been particularly successful in using television to its full potential in the education of our youngest citizens (Boyer, 1991; Kunkel & Murray, 1991; Palmer, 1988). Moreover, we also know that television can be both entertaining and educational—a fact observed in studies of public broadcasting programs ranging from *Mister Rogers* to *Reading Rainbow* to *Sesame Street/Electric Company/Ghost Writer* but also observed in commercial television offerings such as a set of

series developed by CBS in the mid-1970s: *USA of Archie*, *ISIS*, and *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*; along with the 30-year performance of a commercial/public swing program, *Captain Kangaroo*.

And yet, these educational programs represent only a small portion of the programs broadcast on our public and commercial television stations. True, cable television adds several channels and a different program mix, but this is still a relatively small and isolated attempt to use television for broad educational purposes. The history of television program development, as Turow (1981) noted, is one of economic enhancement at the expense of education. The more recent entry of a commercial news service for high school students developed by Whittle Communications is an example of one of the more problematic entrepreneurial activities (Murray, 1991; Pool, 1992). And yet, we know that the provision of news and current events through television programming designed for young viewers can lead to increase in awareness of important issues (Burkart, Rockman, & Ittelson, 1992). The policy question turns on whether noncommercial programming such as *CNN Newsroom* is a better alternative to the commercial programming of Channel One. And there are other policy-related concerns about the control—local versus national—of the content of current affairs information in the classroom.

Clearly, television can play a major role in the education of young viewers. Part of that role has been defined by a range of Public Broadcasting System television programs and some cable television channels. However, the commercial television networks have an important role to play in this process, and the Children's Television Act of 1990 has helped to define the nature of this role through the provision of broadly defined educational programming as a component of license renewal. As a nation, we can do more to enhance the educational uses of television.

Hopes

The expectations and debates about television's potential for benefit or harm have been great and heated but we have not achieved the goal of integration of television and other components of a multimedia society in the service of the developing child. Nevertheless, hope springs eternal and there are many changes on the horizon. For example, the 1992 decision by the FCC to allow telephone compa-

nies to compete with cable television systems in the delivery of television programming to the home—the "video dial tone" concept—portends a revolution in the range of services and greatly expanded opportunities for integration of voice, data, and video.

Other significant changes affecting the future of children's television include the Children's Television Act of 1990, which was born of frustration over the systematic failure of the FCC to regulate in the public interest (Kunkel & Murray, 1991; Kunkel & Watkins, 1987; Levin, 1980; Minow, 1991). The 1990 act reintroduced limits on the amount of advertising contained in each hour of children's television, encouraged commercial television stations to broadcast some educational programming (broadly defined) for children, and established the framework for a national endowment for the development of children's television programs. This is an important development in the struggle to convince both the television industry and the viewing public to take television seriously, but it is only the beginning.

What is most needed to ensure adequate support for the developing child in a multimedia society is a collaborative effort among researchers, educators, broadcasters, and public policy specialists (Boyer, 1991; Flagg, 1990; Huston et al., 1992; Palmer, 1988) to develop a national telecommunications plan that will ensure a broad range of television programs targeted to the needs of children at various ages and stages of development. These programs would differ in their scope and theme, but they would share the characteristics of thoughtful, purposeful programming. We need to develop more programming for children that is both entertaining and educational. In short, we need to take television seriously without being too serious.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

August 24, 1995

Commissioner James Quello
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M St. NW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: MM Docket No. 93-48

Dear Commissioner Quello,

I am concerned about the Notice of Proposed Rule Making to tighten the rules on children's programming, including "quotas".

KIMT-TV is the children's station in our DMA. We have a very popular Kid's Club with thousands of members. They get newsletters which contain educational information.

I really don't believe quotas are necessary. We understand the current rules and follow them to the letter.

We seek out projects to educate children and teens via short segment stories and announcements which praise them for their efforts.

Broadcasters have responded to the Children's Act by major increases in educational and other related programming.

Sincerely yours,

John Shine
General Manager

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MAY 21 1996

August 24, 1995

Commissioner James Quello
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M St., NW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: MM Docket No. 93-48

Dear Mr. Quello,

In response to the "*Children's Television Act*" broadcasters have significantly increased children's educational and informational programming. This Act and current FCC rules are working to increase the amount and quality of this programming. Therefore, new rules are not needed.

Broadcasters understand the current definition of "educational and informational children's programming," and no changes should be implemented.

Rules quantifying, (quotas), the amount of Children's programming are absolutely unnecessary as broadcasters are responding to the current Act in place and the unquantified obligation in the current rules with more and better educational and informational programming for children. Quantification will set the maximum as well as the minimum, thus hindering the potential growth this programming to future generations

Thank you for your consideration of these points.

Respectfully,

Mark Winslow
General Manager

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