

## A STATEMENT BY ALL SEGMENTS OF THE TELEVISION INDUSTRY

The National Broadcast Networks (including PBS)  
National Cable Television Association  
National Association of Broadcasters  
Motion Picture Association of America  
Association of Local Television Stations  
and other participants

During the past two months all segments of our industry have discussed a plan to give more information about TV programs to the parents of America. We have reached the following conclusions:

1. The television industry, broadcasters, cable and the production community have unanimously agreed to voluntarily rate TV programs, to encode them to activate an electronic device which in turn responds to parental choice, and to infuse all we do with integrity and purpose. All elements of the TV industry will rise to this challenge, ready to participate in a national voluntary enterprise which we believe will be useful and valuable to the parents of America.

2. We are going to provide parents with more information about TV programs, similar to parental information provided by the MPAA movie ratings for the past 27 years, which have won consistently high approval from parents. We do this so that parents can more effectively monitor the TV viewing of their young children. All programs will be self-rated consistent with the overall rating guidelines, with ratings applied by the distributor of the program.

3. We will construct an industry ratings review process, composed of various segments of our industry, which will, from time to time, examine the ratings of specific programs and comment as to the appropriateness of the ratings.

4. To carry forward this huge voluntary effort, an Implementation Group under the leadership of Jack Valenti, whose membership will be drawn from all parts of our industry, will begin work immediately to draw up the design and the procedures of this new rating project, which explores unmapped terrain. There is a massive amount of detail to be worked out. We intend to do both technical and audience research, refining and revising our plans, so that when implementation takes place it is grounded in reality. We hope to have this new ratings system in place no later than January, 1997.

5. Our objective is clear and firm. This enterprise is totally voluntary. There will be no government involvement of any kind. Within each of us is a unity of belief that government-censorship, in whatever form, no matter how benign in its public declarations, is fundamentally in conflict with more than 200 years of our national heritage of freedom of speech, and collides directly with the Constitutional protection of the First Amendment.

February 29, 1996

**NATIONAL SURVEY SHOWS WIDESPREAD SUPPORT BY PARENTS  
FOR TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES**

Listed below are highlights of a national survey of parents with children under age 18. The survey of 1,207 parents was conducted between December 9-11, 1996 by Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies.

- o 90 percent of America's parents favored the TV Parental Guidelines system as it has been created, with 58 percent "strongly" in favor and 32 percent "somewhat" in favor.
- o 84 percent of parents understand the movies ratings system; 50 percent very well and 34 percent fairly well.
- o 79 percent of parents believe the movie ratings are helpful in deciding whether or not children can go to a particular movie; 32 percent very helpful and 47 percent somewhat helpful.
- o 83 percent of parents said a television rating system like the one used for movies would be helpful to them; 45 percent very helpful and 38 percent somewhat helpful.
- o 86 percent of parents favored the two children's guideline categories; 10 percent opposed the categories and 4 percent were unsure.
- o 89 percent favored the other four categories in the guidelines system; 9 percent opposed them.
- o 72 percent favored the networks applying the guidelines; 24 percent opposed.
- o 85 percent favored the function of the Oversight Monitoring Board; 11 percent opposed.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES</b> <b>OUTREACH MEETING PARTICIPANTS</b></p>
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**Medical Outreach Meeting Participants**

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1. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
2. American Academy of Pediatrics
3. American Medical Association
4. American Nurses Association
5. American Psychiatric Association
6. American Psychological Association
7. Institute for Mental Health Initiatives
8. Harvard Medical School

**Education Outreach Meeting Participants**

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1. American Association of School Administrators
2. American Federation of Teachers
3. National Association of School Psychologists
4. National Association of Elementary School Principals
5. National School Boards Association

**Academic Outreach Meeting Participants**

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1. Joanne Cantor, Ph.D., Professor, University of Wisconsin
2. Joel Federman, Co-Director, Center for Communication and Social Policy, UC - Santa Barbara
3. George Gerbner, Ph.D., Dean Emeritus, Annenberg School of Communication
4. James Hamilton, Ph.D., Director, Duke University, Program on Violence and the Media
5. Dale Kunkel, Ph.D., University of California at Santa Barbara
6. Alvin Poussaint, Ph.D., Director, Harvard University, Media Center for Children
7. Ellen Wartella, Ph.D., Dean, College of Communication, University of Texas - Austin

**Child Advocate Outreach Participants**

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1. American Center for Children's Television
2. Center for Media Literacy
3. Center for Media Education

4. Children's Action Network
5. Children Now
6. Defense Fund
7. Children's Defense Fund
8. Just Think Foundation
9. National Alliance for Non-Violent Programming
10. National Association of Child Advocates
11. National Association for Family and Community Education
12. National Coalition on Television Violence
13. The Coalition for America's Children
14. National Parent Teacher Association
15. Working for Alternatives to Violence in Entertainment
16. National Coalition on Television Violence

#### **Religious Outreach Meeting Participants**

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1. American Baptist Churches
2. Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
3. Christian Life Commission, Southern Baptist Convention
4. National Council of Churches
5. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
6. Congress of National Black Churches, Inc.
7. Episcopal Church
8. Lutheran Council in the USA
9. National Association of Evangelicals
10. Presbyterian Church (USA)
11. Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
12. United Methodist Church
13. The United States Catholic Conference
14. United Church of Christ
15. Union of American Hebrew Congregations

**Statement**  
**Chairman Reed E. Hundt**

This Public Notice establishes a comment period for the public to provide the Commission with their views on the industry's ratings proposal. As mandated by Congress the Commission will determine, in consultation with appropriate public interest groups and interested individuals whether the industry ratings proposal is "acceptable" and whether it adequately addresses Congress' concern that parents be provided with timely information about the nature of upcoming video programming and with the technical tools that allow them easily to block violent, sexual or other programming they believe harmful to their children. In this regard, we seek to develop a full record that includes the views of parents, teachers, public interest groups, medical professionals and representatives from the industry.

We have established an electronic mail address, "vchip@fcc.gov," to make it easier for the public to file informal comments with the Commission. This electronic mail address is also accessible via the Commission's Internet site (<http://www.fcc.gov/vchip>). In addition, many members of Congress and a number of public interest groups have requested that a public hearing be scheduled to discuss these issues. I believe this is a good idea and is fully consistent with Congress' direction that we decide "in consultation" with public interest groups and other interested parties whether the industry ratings proposal is acceptable and satisfies the other statutory criteria. I plan to schedule such a public hearing after the initial comment period set forth in the Public Notice has closed and will announce further details in the near future.