

March 1997

Chairman Reed Hundt and FCC Commissioners
c/o Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street N.W., Room 222
Washington, DC 20554

RECEIVED
JUN 17 1997
Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman Hundt and Commissioners:

RE: CS Docket No. 97-55, FCC 97-34

I am writing on behalf of the National PTA to voice my opposition to the v-chip rating system as presented by Jack Valenti, Chair of the TV Rating Implementation Group, on January 17, 1997. The rating symbol on the TV screen does not provide sufficient content information so that parents can make decisions about what is appropriate TV programming for their children. Major surveys released this fall which demonstrate overwhelming parent preference for a rating system that gives parents information about the content of programs were conducted by the National PTA, *U.S. News and World Report*, and Media Studies Center/Roper. Parents do not want the TV industry to interpret what is best for their children. Parents want to make those choices themselves based on content information about the program. Any rating system without content descriptions on the screen and publicized in periodicals that carry TV scheduling is of no use.

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Thank you for this opportunity to comment on an issue so important to children and families.

Sincerely,

Carol Payne

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Veronica Y. James
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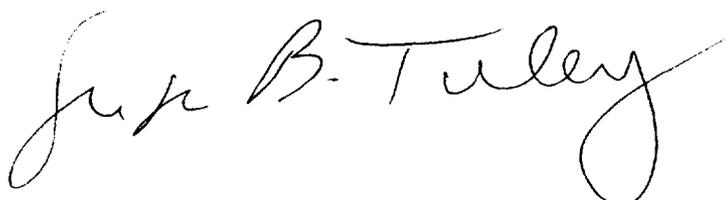
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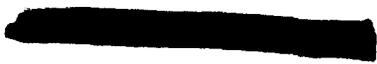
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CS 97-55



Chairman Reed Hundt
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street N.W.
Washington DC 20554

May 30, 1997

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JUN 17 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Dear Sir:

For my high school Federal Government class, I have chosen to work on a project concerning television censorship. A main focus of the project is the new voluntary ratings system the television industry has created in accordance with the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

In my research, I have found that in surveys, a large majority of parents, approximately 79%, are reportedly dissatisfied with this rating system. The most common complaint is that the system is not specific enough, as the networks' system only rates on an age basis. Most parents want a system that rates programs by content, so that they can make judgments on their own about what is and is not suitable for their children. Some parents have pointed out that a child's age does not necessarily reflect a child's maturity.

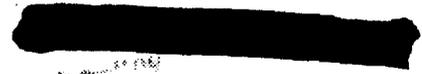
When the FCC makes its decision on whether or not the ratings system is suitable, it is my hope that these things will be kept in mind. I also hope that there will not be too much of a delay until the decision is made. It is clear that most parents, for whom this was designed, want a better, more detailed system. The television networks should have guidance on this matter. Hopefully, an arrangement can be made that will benefit all parties.

Matthew Howell
1693 Oxford-Trenton Road
Oxford OH 45056

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CS 97-55



PORT JENNINGS

Youth baseball team disbands after spat over X-rated sponsor

LILLIAN, Ala. (AP)—The Lillian Barracudas are no more, ripped apart in a dispute between a shop owner and parents who didn't want their children serving as "human billboards" for a store that rents X-rated videotapes.

Like other Dixie Youth Baseball teams, the Barracudas wore uniforms sporting their sponsor's name — C & J Video. Some unhappy parents, including the team's manager, filed a civil rights lawsuit.

The team, for boys under 12, was dissolved Wednesday, to settle the legal fight.

"A 10-year-old can't buy an X-rated video. Why should a 10-year-old advertise in X-rated video?" said Barracudas manager Calvin Bartl, a youth pastor at the evangelical Alliance Church in nearby Elberta who had a son and nephew on the team.

"Standing up for what you believe is pretty hard, but sometimes it's worth it," said his nephew, 11-year-old pitcher Nathaniel Bartl.

C & J Video owner David Bryan, who also had a son on the team, had sponsored the Barracudas for four years and said his rights to free enterprise were trampled.

The lawsuit, filed by Bartl and the parents of three other players, defended their "sincerely held religious beliefs," including refusing to let their sons wear jerseys advertising the store.

To settle the suit, lawyers

worked out an agreement to disband the Barracudas and send the 16 players to five other teams.

"Play ball," Circuit Judge Lyn Stuart said.

The store, the only video rental place in town, is on a busy corner in this unincorporated community near Pensacola, Fla. Customers must show identification to enter a X-rated video section.

Bartl and other parents said they didn't realize the video store was the sponsor until after the team played its first game in early April. The jerseys weren't ready until a couple of games into the season.

The benches cleared after the Lillian Sports Association refused to allow the four boys whose parents objected to wear jerseys without any sponsor name. League rules say all team members must wear identical uniforms.

Even boys whose parents didn't object to the uniforms stopped coming to games, scared away by the publicity. Bartl usually lacked enough players to field a team.

The harmful effects of television on America's children is far greater than most people realize, but the way to correct it is not by censorship, says a national leader in the campaign.

"We have to figure out other ways to do it," said David Walsh, president and founder of the National Institute on Media and the Family.

A psychologist with the Interview Health Systems in Minneapolis, Walsh is author of "Selling Out America's Children," a book on the impact of advertising and commercialism.

He said that while most of the attention is focused on the impact of television sex and violence, he thinks there's a bigger problem. Television has become the major storyteller to American children, and "whoever tells the story defines the culture," Walsh said. "The most harmful effect (of TV) is that it has created a culture of disrespect. It starts to redefine how it is that we're supposed to be treating each other."

He said a content-analysis of TV programs with sexual encounters found that in 94 percent of the sex scenes, the couples were not married.

"It (television) normalizes behavior. Kids think that's the way everybody acts," he said.

Studies have also found a direct inverse correlation between low reading scores and the amount of time a child spends watching TV, he said.

Studies of how American children spend their waking hours have found the average child spends 28 hours a week watching TV and four hours playing video games.

Walsh suggests some simple things parents can do.

"In 60 percent of American families, the TV is on during at least one meal a day. Turn it off during meals.

"Sixty percent of American children have a television in their own bedroom. Take it out."

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I predict a lawsuit against the television

indicating avoid the FCC on the part
10 years. Parents are
fighting mad!
TV and teach socially
correct values! Father who are sick

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Monica M. Dupini

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Deborah Brody

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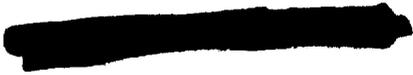
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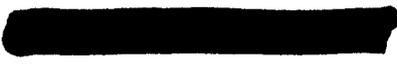
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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glenn Jackson".

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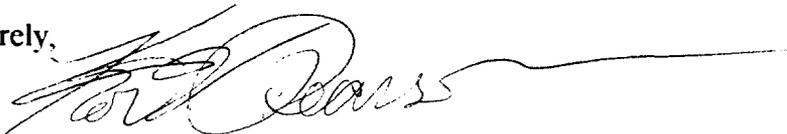
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Sincerely,

Leslie Kazalski

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American Association of School Administrators



1801 N. Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 528-0700

Handwritten initials/signature

FAX TRANSMITTAL COVER SHEET

Date: 6-6-97

To: Reed Hundt, Chairman, FCC

Fax #:

Re:

Sender: Gary Marx

[voice mail] 703-875-0737
[fax] 703-528-2146

YOU SHOULD RECEIVE 3 PAGE(S), INCLUDING THIS COVER SHEET. IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE ALL THE PAGES, PLEASE CALL (703) 875-

Comments on Children's Television Act

If you are unable to get through fax (703) 528-2146, please try these other fax numbers: (703) 807-1849 or (703) 841-1543.

CS 97-55



American Association of School Administrators

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

June 6, 1997

Reed E. Hundt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20054

Dear Mr. Hundt:

The American Association of School Administrators has supported the development of a rating system for television programs to help parents determine what may or may not be appropriate for their children. In fact, we commended Jack Valenti and the industry for their strenuous efforts in producing these ratings. At the same time, we asked that industry representatives listen closely to educators and parents to determine if modifications might be needed prior to the ratings becoming official.

We want you to know that we fully understand the concerns of producers, writers, directors, and programmers in maintaining creative freedom.

Since the ratings were issued, we have paid particular attention to comments about them. Jack Valenti hosted a televised panel discussion with students during our National Conference on Education in February. He rightly stated that people needed a reasonable amount of time to use the ratings before rejecting them and pointed to motion picture ratings as an example of a system that has taken hold. During the past few weeks, PBS aired a report on a hearing held in Peoria to gain parent, child, and community comments. Our conclusion is that the ratings are well conceived but may need just a slight adjustment.

Therefore, we are recommending that the basic icons be maintained. However, in the TV-PG, TV-14, and TV-M categories, we would like to see added within the icon box the letters L (for language), S (for sex), and/or V (for violence) to let parents know the reason(s) the program received this rating. Those letters could possibly appear in reasonably sized type in the corners of each box. This is a minimal variation that preserves the excellent work of the industry while adding an element that will enhance the utility of each of these icons. Of course, major work will need to be done to encourage programmers to use the icons, to educate the American people about what they mean, and to get other media, such as newspapers, to carry the designations in program schedules.

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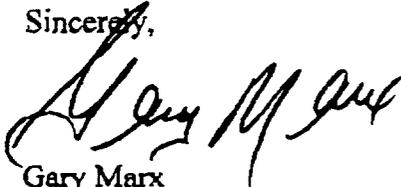
Page 2

We do not believe this issue should become a platform for people to gain political advantage nor should it be a win-lose situation for the industry or educators and parents. It is simply a slight modification of the icons to reflect some of the comments that have come to the surface since the initial ratings were announced.

It is our hope that educators, parents, and the industry will come together on this issue on behalf of our children. They are our future, and we need to treat them well.

Very best wishes.

Sincerely,



Gary Marx

Senior Associate Executive Director

cc: Paul Houston
Bruce Hunter

April 1997

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Commission 1919 M Street NW, Room 222
Washington DC 20554

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JUN 17 1997

Dear Chairman Hundt and Commissioners:

RIE: CS Docket No. 97-55, FCC 97-34

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

I am writing on behalf of the National PTA and the North Ogden Junior High PTSA to voice my opposition to the v-chip rating system as presented by Jack Valenti, Chair of the TV Rating Implementation Group, on January 17, 1997. The rating symbol on the TV screen does not provide sufficient content information so that parents can make decisions about what is appropriate TV programming for their children. Major surveys released this fall, which demonstrate overwhelming parent preference for a rating system that gives parents information about the content of programs, were conducted by the National PTA, *USA News and World Report*, and Media Studies Center/Roper. Parents do not want the TV industry to interpret what is best for their children. Parents want to make those choices themselves based on content information about the program. Any rating system without content descriptions on the screen and publicized in periodicals that carry TV scheduling is useless.

The FCC, by law, is required to determine whether the industry's rating system has met statutory requirements of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. I do not believe this system does so and ask that the FCC not approve the industry rating system. Instead, we request the following:

- That under no circumstances should the FCC approve the industry's rating system. Further, the FCC should accept no rating system that does not include content information about programs such as **V (for violence)**, **S (for sexual depiction and nudity)** and **L (for language)**;
- That the FCC require a V-chip band broad enough that would allow parents to receive more than one rating system;
- That the rating icon on the TV screen be made larger, more prominently placed on the screen, and appear more frequently during the course of the program;
- That the rating board be independent of the industry and the FCC and that it include parents; and
- That any rating system approved by the FCC be evaluated by independent research to determine if it meet the need of parents.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on an issue so important to children and families.

Sincerely,

Laura J. Hundt
1889 N. Fruitland Dr.
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