

Lucile Packard
Children's Hospital
AT STANFORD



04-261

Pediatric Residency Program

March 8, 2007

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Dear Commissioner,

As pediatricians in the Bay Area, we were delighted to learn that the FCC is drafting a report to Congress that would regulate violent programming on television as it does for other indecent material. I am especially in support of monitoring the content of cable programming where shows inappropriate for viewing by children and adolescents are too readily accessible to everyone. Cable and satellite companies have long endorsed parental discretion to limit children's exposure to media violence. While parental intervention is imperative, innumerable studies linking media violence with aggressive behavior in children mandate a need for definitive action.

As affirmed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, over 1000 studies have clearly defined a correlation between television violence and aggressive behavior among children and adolescents. The primary consequences of viewing violence include internalization of aggressive attitudes and behaviors, desensitization to real-life violence, fear of being victimized, and modeling of poor conflict resolution skills. Television tends to glamorize violence, and real-life consequences including physical pain, emotional devastation, and legal punishment are rarely detailed. A more subtle but pervasive effect of media violence is an unhealthy heightening of a child's anxiety and insecurity about his or her safety.

The United States leads the industrialized world in murder, non-homicidal violent crimes, juvenile crime, teen suicide, and imprisonment. The Surgeon General's report on youth violence released by Dr. David Satcher in 2001 illustrated that while arrests for homicide, forcible rape, and robbery declined since 1993, arrests for aggravated assault did not. Between 1980 and 2003, juvenile arrests for simple assault increased 269% for females and 102% for males. This is a disturbing revelation – the irregularity of arrests for violent crimes is set against a backdrop of persistent and escalating violent behaviors among youth.

It is our commitment to ensure that our children grow into healthy adults both in body and in mind. While we recognize that limiting media violence alone will not completely eradicate aggression among our youth, we believe that this regulation is an absolutely necessary step towards this goal. Parents also need to clearly hear the message that this is a significant priority among our leaders. It is time for the leaders of our nation to take a firm stance in protecting the future of our nation: our children. Therefore, we sincerely ask you to lend your undivided attention and support to this long-awaited report.

Sincerely,

Patricia Lee, MD

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