



When the ABC Network decided to air *Saving Private Ryan* during prime time on Veterans Day in 2004, ABC affiliates were provided advance notice by the Network and gave local affiliates ample opportunity to preview the program prior to the scheduled air date. The Network recognized that the film, notwithstanding its historical and cultural significance, contained elements that local stations might determine to be unsuitable for their individual communities, and affiliates were able to make individual judgments about whether to air the program. Some affiliates declined to air the program; others took a different view and aired it.<sup>3</sup> Because of the sensitive nature of the film's content, affiliates welcomed the advance notice, which was consistent with ABC's on-going affiliate-review policy.

The ABC Affiliates support the comments of the CBS Affiliates and NBC Affiliates whose comments offered a similar view. Of course, were the networks' practices to change and the networks to fail to give adequate prior notice to affiliates of content that may be unsuitable in some localities, the Association would reassess its position. At the present time, however, this aspect of the network-affiliate system is working and a pre-screening rule is not warranted.

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<sup>3</sup> In the wake of Veterans Day 2004, many ABC affiliates, whether they aired the film or not, received correspondence from viewers that both supported and decried their local station's decision. In other words, a station's decision not to air the movie resonated with some viewers but offended others. Similarly, a station's decision to air the movie resonated with some viewers but offended others. Thus, when stations do have the opportunity to pre-screen programming, their ultimate decision whether to air the program impacts different segments of the local community differently, and no station can please all of the people all of the time.

**Conclusion**

We, therefore, respectfully urge the Commission to refrain from adopting a new pre-screening network program rule.

Respectfully submitted,

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