

**REMARKS OF
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PARENTS TELEVISION COUNCIL PRESS CONFERENCE
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Thank you, Tim, for inviting me over and for the long-time commitment of the Parents Television Council to reverse wanton violence on our broadcast media. It is time—in fact, it is long past time—for all of us to step up to the plate with meaningful action on media violence. You've long done your share at PTC. Most of the rest of us haven't.

As parents and guardians of our children, we each have a responsibility and most us could be better stewards of that responsibility. We can limit, even if we cannot control, our children's access to media violence. But none of us can solve it alone or just as parents—unless you're a far more effective parent than me. It has gone way beyond that. But we can also insist on positive action from industry and from government. As a regulatory commission, the FCC should be not only considering what action we can take; we should be developing options that those in Congress who have expressed an interest could consider.

And then, of course, there's the industry. Our media industries need to come to some kind of consensus about what they can do—and they can do a lot—to stem the tide of violence that study after study relates to terrible behavioral consequences for our kids and our country. We don't need to hear more excuses from industry like "The other fellow's doing it, so I have to, too." That's not management of the airwaves to serve the public interest. That's management of the airwaves to circumvent the public interest—and we are, all of us, paying way too high a price for it.

In my job as a Commissioner at the FCC, I hear from parents all across the country about what their children are watching on television. I have heard thousands upon thousands of voices crying out in unison—with concern and anger over the messages television is transmitting, wittingly or unwittingly. I hear worry over how our people's values—especially our kids' values—can be affected by the extraordinary, escalating, often-brutal and usually gratuitous violence brought into our living rooms just about around-the-clock. I hear alarm about the desensitization this kind of violent programming can produce. People are concerned about this race to the bottom; they wonder if there even *is* a bottom. I do, too. Has the "vast wasteland" Newton Minow worried about years ago morphed into a vast violent wasteland?

Part of people's concern—in fact, a significant part—is the rampant media consolidation the country has endured over the past decade, with its accompanying loss of local control and community checks and balances—replaced too often with an always-on marketing plan of selling products to a particular demographic, on the assumption that this demographic will best respond when it is under a constant barrage of sex and violence. People have a hard time understanding why the airwaves they own should be

used for purposes they so strongly condemn.

So I hope that reports like the one PTC is releasing today will really focus the spotlight on what has been creeping into our living rooms for too long. I hope it will spur the media industries to develop something akin to the voluntary codes that once limited the amount of violence that broadcasters would show. And I hope it will encourage all of us to get involved, because each of us—as parents, industry leaders, or government officials—has a role to play if we are ever going to get a handle on this issue.

Finally, it is clear that many of our representatives in Congress are watching carefully. Right now, the FCC is preparing a report responding to concerns raised by 39 Members of Congress about the level of violence on America's television. I hope this report will present not only a good analysis of where we are, but propose some meaningful options for future action. If broadcasters do not step up to the plate and self-police, I don't think any of us should be surprised if Congress decides to step in.

So, again, thank you Tim, thank you Parents' Television Council, and thanks to the press who came out today for this important announcement. I hope this issue receives the kind of broad coverage it deserves.