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What about the harm done to our families?

By **KELLI TURNER**

Sen. Doug Jackson has proposed legislation that would fine cable companies for airing obscene ads ("State ban urged for 'obscene' TV ads," Jan. 13). So, what is obscene?

One definition is "designed to incite lust or depravity." Most would agree that the *Girls Gone Wild* commercials mentioned in the article do just that. However, as the seven pages of online comments indicate, many people have a problem



TURNER

with legislation that comes anywhere close to violating the First Amendment right to free speech. Which makes me wonder — does the First Amendment still grant me the right to say what I want, or is it just an excuse to make a commercial of two girls kissing?

Don't squelch those who object

Some posters suggested Sen. Jackson change the channel, turn it off, or get rid of his television completely. In other words, if Sen. Jackson thinks GGW is too much, he should just be quiet about it while forfeiting his rights to watch the public airwaves. The same people who bristle at the thought of speech infringements have no problem squelching the senator's rights.

Some of the comments stated that the senator should learn how to use V-Chip technology. V-Chips rarely work with regular programming and never work on commercials. Many comments addressed the need for more parental control, and I agree. In our home, a code is required for programming beyond a PG rating and some channels are blocked completely. But what can I do when, in the middle of *American Idol*, Fox runs ads for network shows *24* (rated TV-14V), *Prison Break* (TV-14LV), and the movie *Blood and Chocolate* (PG-13)? Perhaps the proposed legislation should state that the product or program advertised can't exceed the rating of the show on which it's being advertised? Maybe infomercials should be rated, too.

Lines already being crossed

One legitimate concern is that late-night advertising and programming will creep into prime time. *NYPD Blue* crossed the line 10 years ago and is now syndicated and available at all hours of the day. HBO's *Sex and the City* is now on TBS at 8 p.m. and ABC at 10:30 p.m. in Nashville and as early as 5 p.m. in other markets.

In Saturday's article, John Baugh stated that the ads this legislation would target aren't "as bad as what you see on cable," and he equates it with trying to keep *The Sopranos* from Tennessee's airwaves. These are two separate matters. When *The Sopranos* was only on HBO, viewers made a choice to bring it into the home; now it is on at 8 p.m. on A&E and as violent as ever.

The First Amendment exists so that we all have the right to state our individual opinions, but what about freedom from speech that can harm me and my family? Here's your chance to exercise your right to free speech as it was originally intended. Let your senator know how you feel about this legislation. It'll be more effective than calling someone a bad name on a message board.

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