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The writers, of Omaha, are directors of the Omaha chapter of the Parents Television Council.

How does the children's rhyme go? "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." Names may not, but what about words?

Today, when you turn on your television, you will hear many words that once were said only in dark, smoky bars or adult theaters. Now, these words are increasingly pervasive on television. Children can learn all sorts of dirty words at all hours of the day.

Studies by the Parents Television Council have shown that once an expletive is introduced on television, usage of the word becomes commonplace. A child hearing the F-word or S-word on television is naturally going to think these words are OK, sending another mixed message to our children. Isn't the world confusing enough as it is?

On Nov. 4, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments for and against using the F-word during prime-time television. The networks want to use this word indiscriminately, any time of the day or night, and not be fined.

Unlike in many countries, the people of the United States own the airwaves, and ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox use them for free with oversight from the Federal Communications Commission. Now television networks want to control what is broadcast into your home, and they want to be paid to do it by advertisers.

On Oct. 21, Peter Chermín, president and chief operating officer of News Corp., boasted that Fox will "fight to the end for our ability to put occasionally controversial, offensive and even tasteless content on the air."

He further claimed that if Fox cannot shovel this "entertainment" into your home, our constitutional liberties are in jeopardy. He actually believes that our desire to curtail profanity on our airwaves is somehow a violation of his First Amendment rights.

So what is a parent to do -- or, rather, what will a nation do?

There is great power in the voice of the people. Representatives in Washington, D.C., recognize that each letter or

e-mail received from a constituent approximates the opinion of 100 others.

Fast communication with government is no longer a problem. Most government institutions and representatives have Web sites and e-mail sites that encourage comments. The FCC can be notified of a license infraction the day it happens.

Our local city governments must review the license agreements of their local television stations on a regular basis. Since these licenses must comply with the community's standards of decency, each citizen can have input through his or her City Council member. We should not allow Hollywood to decide the community standards for Norfolk, Ogallala, Chadron, Kearney and Omaha.

So what will the Supreme Court decide? Are they for or against the use of the F-word? What nonsense. Can anyone who loves children be supportive of profanity?

Let's not allow the entertainment industry to wrest control of the airwaves away from the American people. A generation is at risk, because "our children are watching."