

August 20,2012

The Honorable «First_Name» «Last_Name»
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Representative «Last_Name»:

In 2006, Congress passed the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act in response to growing outrage from the American people over the broadcast networks' abuse of the publicly-owned broadcast airwaves.

Yet since that time, we have seen a concerted effort on the part of the networks to constantly push the outer limit of what may be considered appropriate for the broadcast medium.

Contrary to what executives from NBC, ABC, and CBS told you in 2004 and 2005, and contrary to what attorneys for the networks recently argued before the Supreme Court, they are not acting in the public interest; they are aggressively pursuing a dangerous agenda to completely obliterate any remaining television taboos.

During prime time hours across all broadcast networks, use of the bleeped or muted f-word increased from 11 instances total in 2005 to 276 instances in 2010 – an increase of 2,409%. Use of the bleeped or muted s-word increased from 11 instances in 2005 to 95 instances in 2010 – an increase of 763%.

It's not just the language that's getting coarser. As the LA Times recently reported, PTC research has found a staggering increase in the frequency and explicitness of pixelated nudity on the broadcast networks during primetime hours.

- During the recently concluded television season there were 76 incidents of full nudity in 37 shows compared to 15 incidents in 14 shows the previous year, an increase of 407%.
- Almost 70% of the scenes that depicted full nudity during the 2011 – 2012 study period were in shows that aired before 9:00 pm and as early as 7:00 pm. By comparison half of the full nudity scenes aired after 9:00 pm the previous year.
- Out of the 76 instances of full nudity this past season, only 5 occurred in shows that carried an "S" descriptor which would alert parents to the presence of heightened sexual content.

- The PTC documented only one instance of full frontal pixilated nudity in the 2010-11 television season, but 64 instances just one year later, an increase of 6300%.
- There was a 2700% increase in the use of blurring or pixilation to cover body parts in the recently concluded television season compared to the previous year.
- Two years ago, black bars/logos and/or conveniently placed objects in a scene were used to block the view of sexual organs from the viewer 87% of the time. This past year, 74% of the incidents of full nudity used blurring or pixilation to cover sexual body parts. The full body of flesh tones depicted during full body nudity scenes where sexual organs are blurred or pixilated could be perceived to be a closer simulation of complete frontal nudity given that the viewer is seeing all flesh tones.

It is clear that the networks have completely ignored Congress' admonition to keep the broadcast airwaves relatively clean. Tragically, it is more clear than ever that the networks have no interest in or intention of following the wishes of the very public whose broadcast airwaves they license and profit from.

Just last month the Supreme Court refused to overturn the authority of the Federal Communications Commission to enforce Federal laws prohibiting the broadcast of indecent material during times of day when children are likely to be in the viewing audience. We are gratified that the court ruled with the American people instead of with the networks, who have been waging a six year war for the right to air whatever they want, whenever they want, despite the wishes of the viewing public, and regardless of how many children might be watching.

The Parents Television Council does not seek more laws controlling the behavior of the networks because present law, if properly enforced, should be adequate to the task. However, we fervently hope the networks will again show the restraint and responsibility they showed for the better part of the 20th century, recognizing that as an invited guest in the family home, they have a moral duty to be responsible with the content they air.

The networks have made it abundantly clear they have no intention of respecting either the broadcast licenses they've been granted or the public in whose interest they are licensed to serve. Therefore the American people, whose values are being assaulted on a nightly basis, must insist that the Federal Communications Commission vigorously enforce broadcast decency laws, as mandated by the Congress and affirmed by the Supreme Court.

We call on you to give the FCC your full support for decency enforcement; to urge the FCC to move forward with all due haste in clearing the backlog of 1.6 million unadjudicated indecency complaints; and to give the FCC the tools it needs to ensure enforcement actions are meaningful and appropriate... Because Our Children Are Watching.

Sincerely,



Timothy F. Winter, President
Parents Television Council