



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 2, 2004

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FCC COMMISSIONER MARTIN SUPPORTS THE OPENING OF INVESTIGATION INTO BROADCAST OF SUPER BOWL HALFTIME SHOW

Commissioner Kevin Martin today issued the following statement:

“I am dismayed and disappointed by the broadcast of the halftime show of the Super Bowl. The Super Bowl is a time when families gather around the television. Indeed, the broadcast of indecent programming is prohibited before 10:00 pm because children are likely to be in the audience. I agree with Chairman Powell that our nation’s children, parents and citizens deserve better.

For over a year, I have been urging the broadcast and cable industries and the Commission to provide more tools for parents desiring to watch television together with their families.* I have been calling on the Commission to more vigorously enforce our indecency laws. Congress prohibited the broadcast of obscene, indecent and profane material, and it charged the FCC with implementing this ban. The FCC therefore plays an important role in protecting Americans, particularly children, from indecent programming. I take this responsibility seriously. I am concerned that the Commission is not doing all it should in this area. We have been interpreting the statute too narrowly. We need to enforce our rules more stringently.

If we were implementing our statutory mandate effectively, our rules would serve as a significant deterrent to broadcasters considering the airing of obscene, indecent and profane material, and our fines would punish violators sternly. I am concerned that we are failing on both fronts. Indecency complaints used to number in the hundreds, we now receive them by the tens of thousands. Clearly, consumers are concerned. The FCC needs to respond.

I support the Commission opening an investigation into this broadcast and am pleased that a majority of the Commission has recognized the importance of addressing the increase in the amount of coarse programming on television.”

*Commissioner Martin’s prior statements on this point are available on his website, including: <http://www.fcc.gov/Speeches/Martin/2003/spkjm301.pdf>, http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-234613A1.doc, http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-03-71A3.pdf, and http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-241932A1.pdf.

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