

**Remarks of FCC Chairman Kevin J. Martin  
Common Sense Media Awards  
Washington, D.C.  
September 6, 2006**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Hello everyone. I am Kevin Martin, Chairman of the FCC. I want to salute Elmo and all of his friends at the Sesame Workshop for doing such a great job with children's programming. It is so important to have quality shows on television that parents can watch with their children.

Tonight I have the privilege of honoring an icon in the history of television and extraordinary leader in public service, Newton Minow.

Chairman Minow and I are connected in several ways. First, his daughter, Martha, was my and my wife's first professor at Harvard Law School. Second, I want to make clear that Newt, not I, was the youngest Chairman of the FCC.

But seriously, as FCC Chairman, Newt, more than anyone, stressed the importance of making high quality programming available on television.

He focused the country's attention on the subject with his famous 1961 speech decrying the "vast wasteland" of television. Newt emphasized that he was speaking not only as the Chairman of the FCC, but as a television viewer and as the husband and father of television viewers.

Many years later, Newt said that he was surprised that the speech was remembered more for the "vast wasteland" phrase than for its emphasis on the public interest, which is what he intended. In the speech Newt told broadcasters that since the TV industry possessed the most powerful voice in America, it was essential to make that voice "ring with intelligence and leadership."

In challenging broadcasters to do better, Newt emphasized that more than ratings should govern what is on television. Television could and should enrich people's lives. Newt had tremendous insight when he first spoke out. Television had an enormous impact on the public then, and its influence on our society has only increased over the years.

But it was not just his insight; it was his courage in publicly daring the industry to achieve a higher vision that has served as a role model for me. And while the industry was shocked and outraged, he stood firm.

Years later, when asked how he handled the industry's response, he stated, "When you are 35, you are less concerned about consequences than when you're 65."

While his point may be true, taking on an industry at any age is a daunting task.

I have personally been inspired by Newt's courage in this area. In fact, it was in reflecting on his "Vast Wasteland" speech several years ago that I first set forth what I thought the industry should do to give parents more tools for parents to control the media: broadcasters should adopt a "Family Hour" and cable operators should give parents more control over their programming.

And so it is now my profound honor to present Newton Minow with the 2006 Common Sense Lifetime Achievement Award.

Congratulations.