



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See *MCI v. FCC*, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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FCC ADOPTS REPORT ON VIOLENT TELEVISION PROGRAMMING AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released today a Report on the issue of excessively violent television programming and its impact on children. The FCC found that research indicates exposure to violence in the media can increase aggressive behavior in children, at least in the short term. Given this finding, the FCC recommends that action should be taken to address violent programming.

The Report released today responds to a request from the U.S House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce that the FCC undertake an inquiry on television violence. Specifically, Congress asked the Commission to consider the harm that excessively violent programming has upon children; whether it would be in the public interest for the Commission to formulate a definition of “excessively violent programming that is harmful to children” and to regulate such programming; and if so, what would be the definition and measures for limiting excessively violent programming most likely to be sustained in court.

In its Report, the FCC:

- agrees with the views expressed by the Surgeon General, and finds that, on balance, research provides strong evidence that exposure to violence in the media can increase aggressive behavior in children, at least in the short term.
- notes that while viewer-initiated blocking and mandatory ratings would impose lesser burdens on protected speech, and is skeptical that they will fully serve the government’s interests in promoting parental supervision and protecting the well-being of minors.
- believes that the V-chip is of limited effectiveness in protecting children from violent television content.
- observes that cable operator-provided advanced parental controls do not appear to be available on a sufficient number of cable-connected television sets to be considered an effective solution at this time.
- believes that further action to enable viewer-initiated blocking of violent television content would serve the government’s interests in protecting the well-

being of children and facilitating parental supervision and would be reasonably likely to be upheld as constitutional.

- finds that studies and surveys demonstrate that the voluntary TV ratings system is of limited effectiveness in protecting children from violent television content.
- believes that Congress could develop an appropriate definition of excessively violent programming, but such language needs to be narrowly tailored and in conformance with judicial precedent.
- suggests that industry could on its own initiative commit itself to reducing the amount of excessively violent programming viewed by children (e.g., broadcasters could adopt a family hour at the beginning of prime time, during which they decline to air violent content).
- observes that multichannel video programming providers (MVPDs) could provide consumers greater choice in how they purchase their programming so that they could avoid violent programming. (e.g., an a la carte regime would enable viewers to buy their television channels individually or in smaller bundles).
- finds that Congress could implement a time channeling solution and/or mandate some other form of consumer choice in obtaining video programming, such as the provision by MVPDs of video channels provided on family tiers or on an a la carte basis (e.g., channel blocking and reimbursement).

Action by the Commission.

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