

November 10, 1999

We are writing to encourage you to use this month's "sweeps weeks" as a time to reconsider some of your prime-time programming.

As you know, the "family hour" has grown increasingly less family-friendly. By some studies, this year's prime-time programming contains more violence, profanity and sexual depictions than ever, even during the earliest prime-time hour. Indeed, the Parents Television Council found that within the last two years, references to sex acts during the family hour have increased by 77 percent, depictions of violence doubled, and profanity jumped by 58 percent.

Of course, you are not legally required to air family-friendly shows during the family hour. It is our hope, however, that you may be willing to consider the implications and consequences of violent and vulgar programming, and reconsider your sponsorship of those shows.

The evidence linking viewing television violence and anti-social behavior is clear. Numerous studies have concluded that images of violence on television desensitize children and many organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, have cautioned against the effects of TV violence on young people. We would be happy to provide this information to you.

We recognize that parents bear the primary responsibility for monitoring their child's entertainment and television viewing. But television executives must also bear some of the responsibility for the programs they produce and promote. We are not asking you to replace parents, but rather, to help them out -- to make their job a little easier by reducing the amount of violence, sex and language in your television shows. We urge you to reverse course and reinstate the family hour, once again making that time slot suitable for children.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Sam Brownback
United States Senator


Byron Dorgan
United States Senator


Henry Hyde
Member of Congress


Tim Roemer
Member of Congress