In the Matter of
Implementation of Section 551 of the
Telecommunications Act of 1996
Video Programming Ratings

REPORT AND ORDER


By the Commission: Commissioners Furchtgott-Roth and Tristani issuing separate statements.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (the "1996 Act"),\textsuperscript{1} Congress determined that parents should be provided with timely information about the nature of upcoming video programming and with the technological tools that would allow them to easily block violent, sexual, or other programming they believe is harmful to their children.\textsuperscript{2} Congress also provided that distributors of video programming should be given the opportunity to develop a voluntary system to provide parents with ratings information.\textsuperscript{3} In response to the 1996 Act, the National Association of Broadcasters ("NAB"), National Cable Television Association ("NCTA") and Motion Picture Association of America ("MPAA") (the "Industry") jointly submitted to the Commission on behalf of their members, a system of voluntary parental guidelines ("TV Parental Guidelines") adopted and implemented by television broadcasters and networks, cable networks and systems, and television program producers.\textsuperscript{4} Section 551(e) of the 1996 Act requires the Commission to determine whether video programming distributors (1) have established acceptable voluntary rules for rating video programming that contains sexual, violent or other indecent material about which parents should be informed before it is displayed to 


\textsuperscript{3}See 1996 Act, § 551(e)(1)(A) and (B); 47 U.S.C. §§ 303, 330.

\textsuperscript{4}The Industry submitted the TV Parental Guidelines to the Commission on January 17, 1997, and submitted revisions to those guidelines on August 1, 1997. See Letter of January 17, 1997 to the Commission from the NAB, NCTA, and MPAA ("January 17, 1997 Submission"); and Letter of August 1, 1997 to the Commission from the NAB, NCTA, and MPAA ("August 1, 1997 Submission").
children and (2) have agreed voluntarily to broadcast signals that contain such ratings.

2. In this Report and Order, we find that the Industry's TV Parental Guidelines establish acceptable voluntary rating rules and that the concomitant agreement to voluntarily broadcast signals containing ratings pursuant to the TV Parental Guidelines are in compliance with the specific requirements of Section 551(e). In a companion item being issued today we adopt technical rules that require television receivers with picture screens 33 cm (13 inches) or greater to be equipped with features to block the display of television programming with a common rating, commonly referred to as the "v-chip" technology. Although we chose to approach the v-chip and ratings proceedings separately, our deliberations in both proceedings have focused on Congress' goal of achieving an effective method by which the rating system, when used in conjunction with the v-chip technology, will provide parents with useful tools to block programming they believe harmful to their children.

II. BACKGROUND

3. In Section 551 of the 1996 Act, Congress made extensive findings with respect to the influence that television has on children, and the need to provide parents with timely information about the nature of upcoming video programming and with the technological tools that allow them easily to block violent, sexual or other programming that they believe harmful to their children. As a result of these findings, Congress called for the establishment of guidelines and recommended procedures for rating certain television programming, and the transmission of rating information for programs which are rated.

4. Congress delayed the Commission's exercise of its authority to establish a rating system.

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5See 1996 Act, § 551(e)(1)(A) and (B).

6See Report and Order in Technical Requirements to Enable Blocking of Video Programming Based on Program Ratings, ET Docket No. 97-206 (hereinafter "V-chip Proceeding"), adopted March 12, 1998. See also Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in ET Docket 97-206, 12 FCC Rcd 15573 (1997); 1996 Act, § 551(c), (d), and (e).


8See 1996 Act § 551 (a)(1)-(9) (reproduced in Appendix A herein).


10Congress directed the Commission to, after consulting with an independent advisory board, establish a system for the rating of video programming for use by parents to determine the appropriateness of specific programming for their children. Section 303(w) of the Communications Act, as added by Section 551(b)(1) of the 1996 Act, provides that the Commission shall prescribe:

(1) on the basis of recommendations from an advisory committee established by the Commission in accordance with section 551(b)(2) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, guidelines and recommended procedures for the identification and rating of video programming that contains sexual, violent, or other indecent material about which parents should be informed before it is displayed to
to permit the broadcast and cable industries to develop an acceptable voluntary rating system for video programming within one year of the enactment of the 1996 Act on February 8, 1996. Specifically, under Section 551(e)(1):

The amendment made by subsection (b) of this section shall take effect 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, but only if the Commission determines, in consultation with appropriate public interest groups and interested individuals from the private sector, that distributors of video programming have not, by such date --

(A) established voluntary rules for rating video programming that contains sexual, violent, or other indecent material about which parents should be informed before it is displayed to children, and such rules are acceptable to the Commission; and

(B) agreed voluntarily to broadcast signals that contain ratings of such programming.

5. Following enactment of the 1996 Act, and over the course of the next year, the broadcasting, cable and program production industries worked together to develop a rating system, which they implemented in early January 1997. Details of the rating system were submitted to the Commission on January 17, 1997. Following the January 17, 1997 Submission, the Commission sought comment from interested parties on the TV Parental Guidelines. Parents groups, public health organizations, members of Congress, public interest groups and others expressed concern about some aspects of the rating system. Discussions between the Industry and certain advocacy groups continued

12January 17, 1997 Submission.
14See e.g., Joint Comments of Center for Media Education, American Medical Association, Center for Media Literacy, Children's Defense Fund, Children Now, Cultural Environment Movement, Institute for Public Affairs of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, Media Center of the Judge Bater Children's Center, National Alliance for Non-Violent Programming, National Association for Family and Community Education, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of School Psychologists, National Coalition on Television Violence, National Council of La Raza, National Education Association, National Institute on Media and the Family, National Parent Teacher Association, Public Media Center, and Teachers for Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment (April 8, 1997); Letter to the Federal Communications Commission, Office
and on August 1, 1997, the Industry submitted to the Commission revisions to the guidelines.\textsuperscript{5} The Industry states that the TV Parental Guidelines, as modified, are supported by nine family and child advocacy groups,\textsuperscript{16} as well as television broadcasters, cable systems and networks, and television production companies.\textsuperscript{17} The revised TV Parental Guidelines were implemented on October 1, 1997.

III. THE TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES

6. According to the Industry, the TV Parental Guidelines are designed so that "category and program-specific content indicators will provide parents with information that will help them make informed decisions about what their children should watch on television."\textsuperscript{18} The TV Parental Guidelines describe a voluntary rating system consisting of six descriptive labels designed to indicate the appropriateness of television programming to children according to age and/or maturity; content indicators concerning sexual situations, violence, language or dialogue; transmission of the ratings information over line 21 of the Vertical Blanking Interval ("VBI"); display of on-screen rating icons and indicators;\textsuperscript{19} and the establishment of an Oversight Monitoring Board.\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{5}See August 1, 1997 Submission. The Commission sought comment on the August 1, 1997 Submission stating that comments already filed would be incorporated and encouraged parties to file new or revised comments to the extent they were concerned with the elements of the August 1, 1997 Submission. See Public Notice, Commission Seeks Comment On Revised Industry Proposal For Rating Video Programming, CS Docket No. 97-55, FCC 97-321 (September 9, 1997) ("Second Notice"). Unless otherwise noted, comments cited herein are in response to the Second Notice.

\textsuperscript{16}See August 1, 1997 Submission at 1-2, and attached Agreement on Modifications to the TV Parental Guidelines, July 10, 1997, ("Joint Agreement") attached as Appendix D.

\textsuperscript{17}On July 10, 1997, the Public Broadcasting Service ("PBS") announced it would also join in the implementation of the revised TV Parental Guidelines.

\textsuperscript{18}August 1, 1997 Submission at 3.

\textsuperscript{19}Under the January 17, 1997 Submission, television programming rating labels are age based with separate categories for programs designed solely for children. See January 17, 1997 Submission at 1-2. Under the supplemental August 1, 1997 Submission, the TV Parental Guidelines add content indicators for violence, sex, language or dialogue, with additional rating information for programs designed solely for children.

\textsuperscript{20}See January 17, 1997 Submission at 4-5; August 1, 1997 Submission at 3.
programming except for news, sports, and unedited MPAA rated movies on premium cable channels.\footnote{January 17, 1997 Submission at 4; August 1, 1997 Submission at 3. Unedited movies that are typically shown on premium cable channels will carry their original MPAA ratings. Movies that were produced before the creation of the movie rating system in 1968 and movies that are edited for television will carry the TV Parental Guidelines.}

The TV Parental Guidelines (labels and content indicators, and respective meanings) are:\footnote{August 1, 1997 Submission at 2.}

For programs designed solely for children:

TV-Y (All Children -- This program is designed to be appropriate for all children). Whether animated or live-action, the themes and elements in this program are specifically designed for a very young audience, including children from ages 2-6. This program is not expected to frighten younger children.

TV-Y7 (Directed to Older Children -- This program is designed for children age 7 and above). It may be more appropriate for children who have acquired the developmental skills needed to distinguish between make-believe and reality. Themes and elements in this program may include mild fantasy or comedic violence, or may frighten children under the age of 7. Therefore, parents may wish to consider the suitability of this program for their very young children. Note: For those programs where fantasy violence may be more intense or more combative than other programs in this category, such programs will be designated TV-Y7-FV.

For programs designed for the entire audience, the general categories are:

TV-G (General Audience -- Most parents would find this program suitable for all ages). Although this rating does not signify a program designed specifically for children, most parents may let younger children watch this program unattended. It contains little or no violence, no strong language and little or no sexual dialogue or situations.

TV-PG (Parental Guidance Suggested -- This program contains material that parents may find unsuitable for younger children). Many parents may want to watch it with their younger children. The theme itself may call for parental guidance and/or the program contains one or more of the following: moderate violence (V), some sexual situations (S), infrequent coarse language (L), or some suggestive dialogue (D).

TV-14 (Parents Strongly Cautioned -- This program contains some material that many parents would find unsuitable for children under 14 years of age). Parents are strongly urged to exercise greater care in monitoring this program and are cautioned against letting children under the age of 14 watch unattended. This program contains one or more of the following: intense violence (V), intense sexual situations (S), strong coarse language (L), or intensely suggestive dialogue (D).

TV-MA (Mature Audience Only -- This program is specifically designed to be viewed by adults and therefore may be unsuitable for children under 17). This program contains one or more
of the following: graphic violence (V), explicit sexual activity (S), or crude indecent language (L).

8. As proposed by the Industry, rating icons and associated content symbols appear for 15 seconds at the beginning of all rated programming and through the use of a display button on a remote control device thereafter.\textsuperscript{23} Under the TV Parental Guidelines, the rating guidelines will typically be applied to television programs by broadcast and cable networks and producers, while television stations retain the right to substitute the rating they deem appropriate for their audience.\textsuperscript{24} The Industry notes that cable networks and television stations will provide rating information to newspapers and publishers of printed and electronic program guides, and will request that these publishers include the appropriate information in their guides.\textsuperscript{25}

9. According to the Industry, the TV Parental Guidelines will work with the v-chip technology to permit parents to block programming with a certain rating from coming into their home. The v-chip, which will be installed in television sets, or available through set-top boxes, will read information encoded in the program and block based on the overall age category or by the S, L, V, or D rating assigned to the program, or by a combination of the two.\textsuperscript{26}

10. The Industry has established an Oversight Monitoring Board to ensure that the rating guidelines are applied accurately and consistently to television programming.\textsuperscript{27} The Board is comprised of a chairman and 23 members, including 6 members each from the broadcast television industry, the cable industry, and the program production community, and 5 non-industry members selected by the Chairman from the advocacy community, for a total of 24 members.\textsuperscript{28} The Oversight Monitoring Board will provide information to producers and other program distributors concerning the TV Parental Guidelines, as well as address complaints and requests from the public about the TV Parental Guidelines and their implementation. The Oversight Monitoring Board will explore attitudes about the TV Parental Guidelines and the way in which they are being applied to programming, conduct focus groups and commission quantitative studies to determine whether the TV Parental Guidelines are providing useful

\textsuperscript{23}Id. at 3, and Joint Agreement. Although we are not, in the v-chip Proceeding, mandating that TV sets display the rating icon in response to a button on the remote control, we encourage manufacturers to develop the technology that would permit this function.

\textsuperscript{24}January 17, 1997 Submission at 4; August 1, 1997 Submission at 3. Each program in a series will be separately rated.

\textsuperscript{25}January 17, 1997 Submission at 5; August 1, 1997 Submission at 3.

\textsuperscript{26}As noted previously, details as to the implementation of the v-chip provisions of Section 551 can be found in our companion item issued today.

\textsuperscript{27}January 17, 1997 Submission at 4; August 1, 1997 Submission at 3, Joint Agreement.

\textsuperscript{28}Id.
information to parents, and consider any needed changes to them.\textsuperscript{29} The Industry has also committed to independent, scientific research and evaluation of the rating system once the v-chip is in place.\textsuperscript{30}

IV. REVIEW OF THE VOLUNTARY PROPOSAL

11. Section 551(e) of the 1996 Act directs the Commission, in consultation with appropriate public interest groups and interested individuals from the private sector, to determine whether distributors of video programming have established acceptable voluntary rules for rating video programming that contains sexual, violent or other indecent material about which parents should be informed before it is displayed to children, and to determine whether distributors of video programming have agreed voluntarily to broadcast signals that contain ratings of such programming.\textsuperscript{31} If we determine that these conditions are not present, we are to establish an advisory committee. On the basis of the advisory committee's recommendations, we would then prescribe guidelines and recommended procedures for the identification and rating of such video programming and to prescribe, in consultation with the television industry, rules requiring distributors of any rated video programming to transmit such rating to permit parents to block display of rated programming.\textsuperscript{32}

(1) Consultation With Appropriate Public Interest Groups and Interested Individuals From the Private Sector

12. To implement Section 551's requirement that we consult with the public regarding the acceptability of the TV Parental Guidelines, we issued public notices on February 7, 1997 (Initial Notice) and on September 9, 1997 (Second Notice) seeking comment on, respectively, the Industry's initial TV Parental Guidelines and the subsequently revised TV Parental Guidelines.\textsuperscript{33} In this regard, we developed a full record that includes the views of parents and teachers, public interest groups, medical professionals, industry representatives and interested individuals from the private sector. In addition to the comments filed in response to our public notices, we received numerous informal comments from interested parties, including comments received through electronic mail, and have made

\textsuperscript{29}Id. The Oversight Monitoring Board held its first meeting on February 26, 1998. The Oversight Monitoring Board reported that, subsequent to the addition of the content icons, it has received 162 comments regarding the rating system, and that only three of these comments were "negative." See Communications Daily, Vol. 18, No. 39 (February 27, 1998).

\textsuperscript{30}August 1, 1997 Submission at Attachment 1.

\textsuperscript{31}Section 551(e)(1)(A) and (B). This Section also required the industry to submit its voluntary rating system within one year after the date of enactment of the 1996 Act. The Industry complied with this requirement by filing details of its rating system on January 17, 1997. To the extent that the Industry modified its guidelines to address concerns raised by the public, we do not believe that this subsequent modification affects the Industry's earlier compliance with the one year requirement.

\textsuperscript{32}Section 551(b)(1).

\textsuperscript{33}See supra at notes 13 and 15.
those comments part of the record.\textsuperscript{34} As a result, however, of the lengthy discussions between the industry and the public on the acceptability of the TV Parental Guidelines after the January 17th filing, as well as a Congressional Hearing on the matter,\textsuperscript{35} we determined that an additional public forum at the Commission was unnecessary.\textsuperscript{36} We believe that Congress's interest in having the Commission consult with the public on the acceptability of the TV Parental Guidelines was augmented, in large degree, by the negotiations that took place between prominent advocacy groups and the industry. As a result, we considered the results of these negotiations, as well as the formal and informal comments filed in our proceeding, in making our determination. In addition, we have met with various parties about their concerns.\textsuperscript{37}

13. Our outreach efforts generated significant input on many important issues.\textsuperscript{38} The January 17th filing generated a large number of commenters,\textsuperscript{39} with the majority of comments reflecting concern that the rating system did not provide specific information identifying whether a program contained sexual, violent or indecent material. In response to the August 1, 1997 revisions to the TV Parental Guidelines, the Commission received 11 formal comments, 2 reply comments and 2 informal comments, the majority of which reflect general support for the revised TV Parental Guidelines. In addition, on August 6, 1997, the Commission received a letter from Representatives Burton, Markey, Moran and Spratt stating that the revised ratings proposal has the broad support of advocacy groups and the broadcasting industry.\textsuperscript{40}

14. Nine prominent advocacy groups have explicitly endorsed the TV Parental Guidelines submitted by the Industry on August 1, 1997.\textsuperscript{41} The groups are the American Medical Association; American Academy of Pediatrics; American Psychological Association; Center for Media Education; Children's Defense Fund; Children Now; National Association of Elementary School Principals; National Academy of Sciences; American Academy of Family Physicians; National Religious Broadcasters; and National Broadcasters Association.

\textsuperscript{34}In response to the January 17, 1997 Submission, the Commission received 52 formal comments, 18 reply comments, 3,166 informal comments, and over 400 electronic mail responses from interested parties. Appendix B is a list of commenters filing in response to the Industry's January 17, 1997 Submission; Appendix C is a list of commenters filing in response to the Industry's August 1, 1997 Submission.

\textsuperscript{35}On February 27, 1997, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, held a hearing on the TV Parental Guidelines.


\textsuperscript{37}Commission staff met with representatives of NCTA, OKTV and NAB, among others.

\textsuperscript{38}Some commenters raised issues outside the scope of this proceeding, and thus are not addressed herein. See e.g., comments of Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression; American Civil Liberties Union.

\textsuperscript{39}See fn. 34, supra.

\textsuperscript{40}Letter from Representatives Burton, Markey, Moran and Spratt to Commission, August 6, 1997.

\textsuperscript{41}Joint Agreement.
Education Association; and the National PTA (the "Concurring Advocacy Groups"). In a statement of acceptance, the Concurring Advocacy Groups state that:

[T]he TV Parental Guidelines have been developed collaboratively by members of the industry and the advocacy community. We find this combined age and content based system to be acceptable and believe that it should be designated as the mandated system on the V-chip and used to rate all television programming, except for news and sports, which are exempt, and unedited movies with an MPAA rating aired on premium cable channels. We urge the FCC to so rule as expeditiously as possible.

15. Most commenters urge the Commission to find that the TV Parental Guidelines, as revised, are acceptable. Commenters representing the interests of children, parents and teachers, medical disciplines, program distributors, film producers and equipment manufactures, as well as several individual commenters support the acceptability of the TV Parental Guidelines. Many commenters find that the TV Parental Guidelines will enable distributors to adequately identify sexual, violent, or other indecent material about which parents should be informed prior to its display to children and to provide parents with timely access to this information. Several commenters, for example, cite specifically the addition of content descriptors for sex, violence, language and dialogue to the TV Parental Guidelines' six age/maturity-based categories as meeting the goal of providing parents with the information they need to make viewing choices for their children. Others cite the addition of the non-industry representatives to the Oversight Monitoring Board in urging acceptance of the TV Parental Guidelines.

16. A few commenters raise concerns about the overall fairness of the Oversight Monitoring Board and consistency in the application of ratings. Some argue for a stronger oversight mechanism, including enforcement and review procedures, that will achieve and maintain consistency of application

42Id.
43Id.
44Many of these groups supported the January 17, 1997 Submission (numerous television stations, middle and high school students, universities and university students, Writers Guild of America, East). Others filed in support of the August 1, 1997 Submission (AACAP & APA; CEMA; Block; Cantor; Collings. Also, AAP, Children Now, and National PTA submitted separate statements in addition to the Joint Agreement).
45See e.g. AAP at 1; Children Now at 1-2; National PTA, attachment; Cantor at 1. Consensus was also facilitated by the elimination of the word "may" from the TV Parental Guidelines' description of age and maturity based categories. AAP at 1.
46AAP at 2.
47See e.g. AACAP & APA at 2; Morality in Media at 8, 15; also VideoFreedom, Inc. at 1-2 (April 8, 1997).
48See e.g. Cantor at 2; AACAP & APA at 2; Morality in Media at 10; National Coalition on Television Violence at 3-4 (April 8, 1997). Concern was also raised about the non-application of ratings to news, sports, program promotions and advertisements. See Morality in Media at 8-9 (April 8, 1997); Para Technologies, Inc. at 18-19 (April 8, 1997).
of the TV Parental Guidelines.\textsuperscript{49} Other commenters encourage the Commission to permit the use of alternative rating systems.\textsuperscript{50}

17. Two commenters, Morality in Media and Robert Kimball, argue that the TV Parental Guidelines are unacceptable even after revisions were made to the system, including the addition of S, L, V, and D descriptors.\textsuperscript{51} These commenters generally contend that the TV Parental Guidelines fail to inform parents of sexual and other indecent material in television programs. Morality in Media believes the TV Parental Guidelines do not give sufficient information to parents because the rating categories do not contain objective and definite criteria for determining a program's rating.\textsuperscript{52} Morality in Media also criticizes the Industry's proposed rating system because it is based on the age-based MPAA rating system, a system it claims provides the industry's own assessment as to the appropriateness of films and is designed to keep from alerting parents as to the inappropriateness of many Hollywood films.\textsuperscript{53} Kimball requests that the Commission not find the TV Parental Guidelines acceptable because they are inadequate and would fail to inform parents of sexual and other indecent material in television programs they may not want their children to watch\textsuperscript{54}. Morality in Media also argues that NBC's failure to rate programs in accordance with the TV Parental Guidelines means that the "Industry" has not voluntarily agreed to transmit the ratings as required by Section 551(e)(1)(B).\textsuperscript{55}

(2) Establishment and Acceptability Of Voluntary Rules For Rating Video Programming

18. After reviewing the TV Parental Guidelines and considering the comments filed and the viewpoints expressed throughout this proceeding, we find that, in accordance with Section 551(e)(1)(A) of the 1996 Act, distributors of video programming have established acceptable voluntary rules for rating video programming that contains sexual, violent, or other indecent material about which parents should be informed before it is displayed to children.

19. Section 551 requires that the Commission determine whether the TV Parental Guidelines are acceptable. As a preliminary matter, we must determine what it means for the rating system to be "acceptable." The term is not defined in the statute, nor are we aware of any statutory interpretation

\textsuperscript{49}AACAP & APA at 2; Morality in Media at 8-9.

\textsuperscript{50}Several parties indicate they are developing alternative rating system that they would like to make available for general use. While no party has sought to have the Commission determine whether its alternative rating system is acceptable, some parties do advocate that parents should have access to such alternative rating systems. See e.g. OKTV at 5-26, (April 8, 1997); Block at 2-3; Cantor at 3; NBC at 3-4; VideoFreedom, Inc. at 4-5 (April 8, 1997).

\textsuperscript{51}Morality in Media at 1; Kimball at 2.

\textsuperscript{52}Morality in Media at 3-9.

\textsuperscript{53}Id.

\textsuperscript{54}Kimball at 1.

\textsuperscript{55}Morality in Media at 15.
of the term that would be relevant to our determination here. Applying the general meaning of the term, we believe that it is reasonable to interpret the statute to mean that the rating system is acceptable if it meets both the specific requirements of Section 551(e) and the overall goals of Congress in enacting Section 551.

20. Section 551(e)(1)(A) states that the rating system must provide information about programming that contains sexual, violent or other indecent material about which parents should be informed before it is displayed to children. The TV Parental Guidelines provide a comprehensive system for rating programming that contains violent, sexual, or other indecent material, with specific rating information for programs designed solely for children. Programming designated solely for children is age-based to indicate programming appropriate for all children (including ages two to six), programming for older children (ages seven and above) with a more specific content indicator for fantasy violence. Programming for the entire audience is also age-based and supplemented by content indicators for sex, violence, adult language and suggestive dialogue. Morality in Media argues that the categories are subjective. We agree with the majority of commenters, however, who believe that the age-based, content supplemented system adopted by the Industry is sufficiently objective to provide parents with information necessary to make informed decisions. We do not agree with commenters who argue that we cannot find the system "acceptable" absent the inclusion of more specific details about varying degrees of violent, sexual, or other indecent materials found in the programming. The TV Parental Guidelines provide for weighing of each of the descriptors depending on which of the age-based categories it is associated with, i.e., the "V" in TV-PG-V means "moderate violence" while the "V" in TV-14-V means "intense violence." As a result, we do not believe that additional descriptors are necessary to meet the goals of Congress in adopting Section 551. Congress required that the rating system be sufficient to advise parents of the appearance of sexual, violent or indecent material in certain programming. We find that the TV Parental Guidelines meet this goal.

21. Some commenters raise concerns that the TV Parental Guidelines do not rate sports, news, commercials or promotions. Parties argue that these programs contain sexual or violent material that may be harmful to children. As an initial matter, we note that the EIA standard that we are


57See also Morality in Media at 2, stating that "[a]s used by Congress, . . . the word 'acceptable' was followed by the phrase 'to the Commission.' This clearly indicates Congress' desire to rely heavily on the expertise of the FCC to 'accept' a rating system which the Commission is satisfied would accomplish the objectives of Congress."

58See August 1, 1997 Submission at 1-2.

59Joint Agreement, Attachment 1.

60Some parties argue, for example, that each "V" rating should be accompanied by a level rating of 1 through 5, for degree of violence. See e.g. Michigan Decency Action Council at 3 (April 8, 1997); Mediascope at 3, 5-7 (April 8, 1997); Langley at 1-2 (April 8, 1997); OKTV at 17-19 (April 8, 1997); also, Morality in Media at 10-12; Kimball at 2.

61In addition, unedited movies with an MPAA rating aired on premium cable channels are exempt.

62Morality in Media at 8-9 (April, 8 1997); Para Technologies, Inc. at 18-19 (April 8, 1997).
adopting in the V-chip Proceeding accommodates the rating of programs, including commercials within the program. Since advertisers target specific audiences reached by particular programming, it is not unreasonable for the Industry to rely on the program blocking mechanism to also filter commercials that appear in the program. While it appears that commercials that are not encoded may be passed through, such as locally inserted advertisements, we do not think that failure to rate advertisements individually will defeat the purpose of Congress in enacting Section 551. We also think it is important to recognize that the decision to exclude these categories of programming was made with the support of the advocacy groups that negotiated revisions to the Industry proposal. Similarly, we think it is not unreasonable for the Industry to exempt sports and news programming. In addition to the practical limitations in rating such programming, we note that Congress recognized the danger in requiring rating of political programming, which is often an integral element in news programming.\textsuperscript{63} As a result, we conclude that the TV Parental Guidelines are acceptable even though the Industry has decided not to rate these programs as a general rule.

22. We agree with commenters who express concern that to be useful, the rating system must be applied in a consistent and accurate manner.\textsuperscript{64} The record here indicates that the Industry has taken steps to insure that this is the case. The agreement reached between the Industry and the advocacy groups commits the Industry to independent, scientific research and evaluation of the rating system once the v-chip is in place.\textsuperscript{65} We believe that this independent research and evaluation is important to determine whether the rating system is working and providing parents with the information needed to make viewing choices for their children. We view this research and evaluation effort as an important opportunity for parents to assess the usefulness of the rating system and provide input on the consistency and accuracy of the ratings. We expect that the research and evaluation of the rating system, once the system has been in use, will allow for adjustments and improvements to the system. We view this commitment as an important element in the proposal.

23. We also believe that the Oversight Monitoring Board can play an important role in making the ratings meaningful by helping to ensure a consistency of approach in rating the programs. We note that in response to concerns raised by the public interest groups, the Industry agreed to add 5 non-industry members, drawn from the advocacy community, to the board.\textsuperscript{66} While some commenters raise concerns that the board, with 19 industry members, is still unbalanced,\textsuperscript{67} we agree with the majority of commenters that the addition of representatives from the advocacy community will provide an important voice for non-industry interests and will permit useful oversight of the rating system.

24. We believe that, based on the record before us, the TV Parental Guidelines serve the

\textsuperscript{63}See Section 551(b)(1) ("... nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to authorize any rating of video programming on the basis of its political or religious content . . .").

\textsuperscript{64}AACAP & APA at 2; Cantor at 2; Collings at 1

\textsuperscript{65}Joint Agreement, Attachment 2.

\textsuperscript{66}August 1, 1997 Submission at 3.

\textsuperscript{67}AACAP and APA at 3; Morality in Media at 15.
goals of Section 551. The voluntary rating system addresses Congress' concern that parents have timely information about the nature of upcoming video programming. The Industry has voluntarily agreed to transmit ratings over line 21 of the VBI. Under the TV Parental Guidelines, rating icons and descriptors will be displayed for 15 seconds at the beginning of a program and may be displayed at any time through the use of a remote control display button. Also, the size of the icon has been increased from the initial proposal so that it will occupy more than 40 scan lines on the television screen. The TV Parental Guidelines, used in conjunction with the v-chip technology, will give parents the tools they need to limit the exposure of their children to video programming that they believe is inappropriate.

25. In the Second Notice we asked for comment on whether the Commission should determine the acceptability of any alternative ratings systems used by video programming distributors. Some commenters asked the Commission to guarantee access to alternative ratings systems, and we are aware of at least one programmer, NBC, that has implemented its own variation of the Industry rating system. We believe, however, that Congress intended that we evaluate only the system of rules established through industry consensus. Section 551 was designed to give the industry an opportunity to come to a consensus on a system of rules before the Commission would establish its own rating guidelines. Just as the Commission would be charged with prescribing one set of guidelines to be followed -- on a voluntary basis -- industry-wide, it is reasonable to conclude that Congress expected any voluntary rules established by distributors under Section 551(e) to be one uniform system arrived at through consensus. This interpretation is borne out by the legislative history, which refers repeatedly to one industry system of rules. The Conference Report, for example, states that the advisory committee provision is only triggered if the Commission determines that "distributors of video programming have not established an acceptable voluntary system for rating programming nor agreed voluntarily to broadcast signals that contain ratings of such programming." The Conference Report further states that the Commission guidelines and recommended procedures discussed in Section 551(b)(1) "are intended to provide industry with a carefully considered and practical system for rating programs if industry does not develop such a system itself." The debate on Section 551 further emphasizes that Congress envisioned the collaborative establishment of one industry rating system. For example, Senator Conrad urged "television broadcasters, cable operators, and other video programmers to take advantage of the 12-month period provided under section 551 to voluntarily develop an identification or rating system that will help parents to make informed decisions about television programming that

681996 Act, § 551(a) (9).

69Joint Agreement.

70Id.

71See NBC Reply Comments at 1-2

72S. Conf. Rep. 104-230, 104th Cong. 2d Sess. 195 (1996) (emphasis added). See also id. at 196 ("The actual effective date has also been made contingent on a determination by the Commission that distributors of video programming have not, by such date, established a voluntary system for rating video programming . . . .") (emphasis added).

73Id. at 195 (emphasis added).
is appropriate for children.\textsuperscript{74} We therefore believe that Congress intended that we evaluate only the single Industry proposal. We make no finding on the acceptability of other ratings systems, including the Industry proposal as it existed prior to the August 1, 1997 modifications.

26. Because we find that Section 551(e) contemplates that the Commission review only the Industry proposal, we similarly conclude that Congress did not intend that we mandate accessibility to alternative ratings systems. Consequently, our companion technical item issued today does not mandate that the v-chip accommodate alternative rating systems, although it does encourage manufacturers to design TV receivers to provide for additional ratings systems to the extent practical. We envision that the Industry and the manufacturers will work together to accommodate industry innovations in the rating system.

(3) Voluntary Agreement to Broadcast Signals

27. The statute also requires that we determine whether "distributors of video programming have . . . agreed voluntarily to broadcast signals that contain ratings of such programming."\textsuperscript{75} The Industry's original proposal stated: "We have agreed to encode the guideline for each program on line 21 of the Vertical Blanking Interval once the Commission establishes a technical standard. This will enable the 'v-chip' and permit parents to use the TV Parental Guidelines to control children's television viewing when parents are not in the home."\textsuperscript{76} According to the original proposal, the industry group that developed the proposed system "represented all segments of the television industry: the national broadcast networks; affiliated, independent and public television stations nationwide; cable programmers, producers and distributors of cable programming; entertainment companies; movie studios; and members of the creative guilds representing writers, directors, producers and actors."\textsuperscript{77} In its August 1, 1997 submission, the Industry reiterated that "[t]he TV Parental Guidelines are voluntarily and broadly supported by the television industry which has pledged to begin transmitting ratings information on line 21 of the VBI within six months."\textsuperscript{78}

28. We recognize that not all video programming distributors have agreed to transmit the ratings system that we have found acceptable. For example, BET has chosen not to participate in the TV Parental Guidelines system, and NBC has decided to continue to apply the Industry ratings system


\textsuperscript{75}Section 551(e)(1)(B).

\textsuperscript{76}January 17, 1997 Submission at 4-5.

\textsuperscript{77}See January 17, 1997 Submission, Attachment: Parental Guidelines for America's Television Programming, a Background Paper; see also August 1, 1997 Submission at 1, stating the continued support of "television broadcasters, cable systems and networks, and television production companies."

\textsuperscript{78}August 1, 1997 Submission at 4.
as it existed prior to the August 1 modifications.\textsuperscript{79} Morality in Media argues that because NBC is an integral part of the industry, its failure to commit to the agreed upon system results in failure by the industry to submit a voluntary plan in accordance with the statute.\textsuperscript{80}

29. We do not believe that the statute requires that every video programming distributor nationwide agree to transmit the ratings. Such a reading would mean, for example, that the failure of a single small television station to transmit the ratings would cause the entire system to fail. On the other hand, we believe that participation must be sufficiently ubiquitous to achieve Congress' goals in enacting Section 551, including the goal of permitting parents "to easily block violent, sexual or other programming that they believe harmful to their children."\textsuperscript{81} The more video programming distributors that do not participate, and the larger the audience reach of the distributors that do not participate, the more difficulty parents will have blocking the programming they consider inappropriate. We stress that we are not forcing any video programming distributor to transmit ratings, or suggesting that they transmit a particular ratings scheme. Under 551(e), we are required to determine whether, as a factual matter, video programming distributors have voluntarily agreed to transmit the Industry proposal. If we find that they have not, the 1996 Act provides that the Commission shall prescribe "on the basis of recommendations from an advisory committee established by the Commission . . . guidelines and recommended procedures for the identification and rating of video programming that contains sexual, violent, or other indecent material about which parents should be informed before it is displayed to children."\textsuperscript{82}

30. The decisions of individual parties, such as NBC and BET, not to participate in the current Industry proposal can make it more difficult for parents who wish to use content indicators to block programming using the TV Parental Guidelines. In the case of BET, which will transmit no ratings at all, parents may be required to use a separate date/time/channel blocking mechanism to block programming (assuming that their television set provides such a feature). As for NBC, a major network, parents will not be able to block programming based upon the different content indicators within each age-based category.\textsuperscript{83} Under the TV Parental Guidelines, for instance, a parent who was primarily concerned about exposing his or her child to television violence could establish a more restrictive standard for the violent programming that would be allowed to enter the home than for sexual situations or strong language. This will not be possible under the NBC approach. Nonetheless, parents will be able to block programming based on age categories.

31. Based on the record, we conclude that Congress' goals will be achieved to a sufficient

\textsuperscript{79}NBC states that its age-based identifiers are supplemented with content-related information through expanded use, where appropriate, of narrative on-screen and audio advisories. NBC Reply Comments at 4.

\textsuperscript{80}Morality in Media at 21.

\textsuperscript{81}Section 551(a)(9) (emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{82}Section 551(b)(1).

\textsuperscript{83}It is unclear whether NBC's decision applies only to the network and its owned and operated stations, or whether its affiliated stations have adopted the approach as well.
degree to warrant a finding that video programming distributors have voluntarily agreed to broadcast the Industry ratings system. To our knowledge, the only national video programming distributors that have elected not to participate are BET and NBC. Given this near-unanimity, we believe that the TV Parental Guidelines will provide parents with a useful and easy-to-use tool to block programming that they consider harmful to their children.

V. CONCLUSION

32. In their joint statement of July 10, 1997, the Industry and Concurring Advocacy Groups ask that we give the rating system a fair chance to work and allow parents an opportunity to understand and use the system.\(^8^4\) Further efforts are underway to provide information and educate parents about the rating system, such as encouraging publishers of periodicals, newspapers and journals to include the ratings with program listings\(^8^5\) and making available videos and brochures to parents through local cable companies, schools, libraries and civic organizations.\(^8^6\) As a result of the joint efforts of the Industry and the public groups who have so diligently participated in the development of the TV Parental Guidelines in furtherance of Congress' goals, we believe that parents will be provided with needed information about programming before it is displayed to children and given the technological tools necessary to easily block programming that they consider harmful.

33. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that pursuant to the authority found in Section 551(e) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the industry's establishment of voluntary rules for rating video programming is consistent with the requirements of Section 551(e) (1) and (2).

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary

\(^{8^4}\)Joint Agreement, Attachment 2.

\(^{8^5}\)August 1, 1997 Submission at 3.

\(^{8^6}\)According to the cable TV industry, parents and families can contact their cable operator, or write to the NCTA to obtain free of charge a video and brochure describing the rating system, and a peel-off sticker with an abbreviated version of the TV Parental Guidelines to attach to their remote control.
APPENDIX A

Communications Act of 1934
as amended by
The Telecommunications Act of 1996

Subtitle B - Violence

Section 551. PARENTAL CHOICE IN TELEVISION PROGRAMMING.
(a) FINDINGS. -- The Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Television influences children's perception of the values and behavior that are common and acceptable in society.

(2) Television station operators, cable television system operators, and video programmers should follow practices in connection with video programming that take into consideration that television broadcast and cable programming has established a uniquely pervasive presence in the lives of American children.

(3) The average American child is exposed to 25 hours of television each week and some children are exposed to as much as 11 hours of television a day.

(4) Studies have shown that children exposed to violent video programming at a young age have a higher tendency for violent and aggressive behavior later in life than children not so exposed, and that children exposed to violent video programming are prone to assume that acts of violence are acceptable behavior.

(5) Children in the United States are, on average, exposed to an estimated 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence on television by the time the child completes elementary school.

(6) Studies indicate that children are affected by the pervasiveness and casual treatment of sexual material on television, eroding the ability of parents to develop responsible attitudes and behavior in their children.

(7) Parents express grave concern over violent and sexual video programming and strongly support technology that would give them greater control to block video programming in the home that they consider harmful to their children.

(8) There is a compelling governmental interest in empowering parents to limit the negative influences of video programming that is harmful to children.

(9) Providing parents with timely information about the nature of upcoming video programming and with the technological tools that allow them easily to block violent, sexual, or other programming that they believe harmful to their children is a nonintrusive and narrowly tailored means of achieving that compelling governmental interest.
APPENDIX B

Responses to Industry Submission of
January 17, 1997
(electronic mail correspondence not listed)

Comments
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Medical Association
American Psychological Association
Ameritech New Media
Benton Foundation
Block, Robert S.
Cantor, Joanne (professor, Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison)
Children Now
Children's Defense Fund
Coats, Senator Dan
Collings, Tim (professor, Engineering Science, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia)
Concerned Women for America
Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association
Cosmos Broadcasting Corporation
Deem, Richard
Douglas, Andre J.T.*
EEG Enterprises
Hutson, William E.
Institute for Public Affairs, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
Joint Congressional Letter (signed by 16 Representatives and 7 Senators)
KAMR-TV
KEYC-TV
KWWL-TV
KXLY-TV
Langley, Scott
Lessie Bates Davis Daycare*
Media Access Project (on behalf of Peggy Charren)
Mediascope
Michigan Decency Action Council
Morality in Media, Inc.
National Alliance for Non-Violent Programming
National Association of Family & Community Education
National Coalition on Television Violence
National Institute on Media and the Family
OKTV
Para Technologies, Inc.
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Public Broadcasting Service
Raff, James C.
Salvatierra, Hector Garcia
Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression
University of California, Santa Barbara Research Team
VideoFreedom, Inc.
Waikman, F. Joseph
WBFX-TV
WGEM-TV
WMTV-TV
WOIO-TV and WUAB-TV
WUAB-TV
WXMI-TV
Writer's Guild of America

*Received After April 8, 1997

Reply Comments
ABC, Inc.
American Civil Liberties Union
American Library Association
American Psychological Administration
Bronsnick, Andrew
Center for Media Education, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,
American Psychological Association, Center for Media Literacy, Children's Defense Fund,
Cultural Environment Movement, Institute for Public Affairs of the Union of Orthodox Jewish
Congregations of America, Media Center of the Judge Baker's Children's Center, National
Alliance for Non-Violent Programming, National Association for Family and Community
Education, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of
School Psychologists, National Coalition on Television Violence, National Council of La Raza,
National Education Association, National Institute on Media and the Family, National Parent
Teacher Association, Public Media Center, Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's
Entertainment.

Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association
Family Research Council
Media Coalition Inc.
National Association of Broadcasters, National Cable Television Association and
the Motion Picture Association of America - Joint Reply Comments
National Campaign for Freedom of Expression
OKTV
People for the American Way
Public Broadcasting Service

Surreply Comments
Block, Robert S.
Hamilton, James T.
Omegapoint Communications (L. Lynn Hinderaker)
Soundview Technologies, Inc. (H. Lee Brown)
The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press
Informal Comments Received

Aaby, Patrick
Abbott, Lori & James
Abeyta, Mrs. G.
Abrams, Andrea
Abro, Christine
Ackerhalt, S.
Ackerman, Linda
Ackerman, Mildred
Ackerman, Scott S.
Adam, Linda
Adams, Bruce & Carol
Adams, Penny
Adams, Sharon & Mack
Adamski, Brenda
Adelmann, Debbie & Wally
Adgate, Mrs. Charles R.
Adkins, Cindy
Aetersack, Patricia D.
Ager, Pat
Ahlmor, Pamela
Ahrens, Michelle
Ahvens, Arnold J.
Aishman, Sharron
Albina, Sharon
Ali, Patricia
Allen, Cara
Allen, Denise
Allgeyer, David
Allnut, Dale
Allorio, Frank
Alloway, Jennifer
Allred, Edward & Arlene
Allsup, Sue
Almond, Vera
Altizer, Greg & Kim
Alvarez, Karla
Alyea, Mischa
Ambrose, Cathy & Bob
Amico, Susan & Dave
Amsler, David
Anderson, Barry K.
Anderson, Bette
Anderson, Brent & Hollie
Anderson, Brad & Valerie
Anderson, Dan & Holly
Anderson, Donna P.
Anderson, Jane
Anderson, Karen M.
Anderson, Kathy
Anderson, Kim
Anderson, Lorraine
Anderson, Melvin H. & Lurlene M
Anderson, Steve & Susan.
Anderson, Sue
Anderson, Susan
Anderson, Terry G.
Anderson, Vicki
Andre, Sue
Andreassen, Erik, et. al
Andresen, Karen
Angel, Helen B.
Angela, Vickie
Anthony, Lorraine
Applewhaite, Andrew
Archer, Tanya
Arendall, Helen
Argyelan, Peggy L.
Armstrong, Debbie L.
Armstrong, Jeannie
Armstrong, Tim
Armstrong, William G.
Arndt, Samantha E.
Arnett, David Bruce (2)
Arnold, Judith M.
Arnold, Scott & Jane
Arra, Linda & Tom
Arthur, John
Asai, E. & Family
Asay, Tamara
Ash-Larson, Beverly
Askew, Dr. & Mrs. Dennis W.
Askew, William
Atayde, Marylou
Atleberry, Debra
Austin, Ellie
Avioh, Virginia
Aycock, Helen M.
Ayuso, Rosalina (Concilio para la
Eduacion de la Familia)
Babcock, Diane
Babcock, Peggy
Baecker, Susan
Baecker, Cathy
Backowski, Phil & Mary
Badeer, Deb
Bagge, Burt
Bahr, Jayne
Bailey, Barbara
Bailey, Melissa
Bailey, Shawn
Bailey, Teresa
Bailey, Melissa
Bainett, Carla
Baird, Tamra M.
Bakeman, Sandra
Baker, Lara
Baker, Leesa
Baker, Lynne
Baker, Maydell
Baker, Michele
Baker, Ralph
Baker, Tera L.
Bakker, Linda, et. al
Balan, Debbie
Balcone, Dyanne
Baldauf, Maria A.
Baldwin, Mrs. Jocelyn
Bales, Leonard & Donna
Ball, Lisa
Ball, Patti
Ballard, Vicki
Balm, Ted
Bambas, Karen et. al
Banales, Dolores
Bancroft, Barbara
Bandsma, Marcia
Banker, Jerry & Janet
Bankston, Elaine
Banner, Raymond V.
Barbarich, Valerie
Barber, E. & Jane
Barber, Kathryn
Barbian, Cyndi
Barbie, Judy S.
Barbour, Corinne Charlton
Barker, Sharon
Barlow, Carolee
Barnett, Sandra H.
Barr, Lori E.
Barrett, Steve & Jana
Barrick, Vera
Barron, June E.
Barry, Carolyn M.
Barry, Jeanie
Bartelmay, Janet
Bartlett, Louise S.
Bartolone, Lynn
Barton, Sandra Jean
Barton, Charlene
Bartosh, Terry
Bartoszek, Jan, et al
Basile, Kim
Bass, Naomi
Bassett, Rona
Bataan, Alvin
Bater, Carol
Beaman, Nina
Beasley, Cheryl
Beatty, Nancy
Beck, Todd & Elissa
Becker, Marla
Becker, Marlene, Gaudio, Bern
Beckett, Garry & Linda
Beeman, Stacy
Beers, Sandra M.
Beggs, Billie
Begin, Suzanne
Beinel, Patricia
Belford, Mr. & Mrs. Jim
Belgen, Tammi
Bell, Lou Ann
Bellusa, Carla
Belsaas, Leonard & Virginia
Bembibro, Ivonne
Benigro, Debra
Benson, Inga
Bentley, Martha
Benton PTA
Benz, Ron
Berberet, Mr. & Mrs. Bill
Berdine, Wilma
Beres, Nancy
Berg, Dr. Jolene
Berg, Rosanne
Berghorst, Mr. & Mrs. Robert
Bermude, Maria C.
Bernhard, Jane M.
Berry, Laura
Berthelette, Carolyn
Best, Joan, et al.
Beutler, Peg
Beyak, Paula
Beyer, Terry & Becky
Bezek, Carrie
Bickford, Gloria
Bickmore, Mari
Bigler, Ken
Bin-David, Cindy
Bingham, Charlotte
Birarelli, Mary A.
Birnbaum, Amy
Bishop, Max & Betty
Bison, Lisa
Bistline, Chris
Bittner, Larry
Bittner, Tracy
Bixby, Michele
Bizzarri, Viola
Black, Betty R.
Black, Pat
Blackham, Nila
Blair, Lynn Dee
Blair, Wade & Dana
Blake, Dolores J.
Blake, Madeleine
Blalock, Ethel
Bland, James
Bland, Kathleen
Blandford, Brian
Blatnik, Suzanne E.
Blough, Cheryl
Blevins, Rhonda
Block, Mitchell & Debra
Blodgett, Marguerite, Piper
Bloecher, Julie
Blonigen, Sister Mary Adella
Blore, Carmel
Blum, Kathleen
Blumenthal, Carol Pinsky
Boardman, Debra
Boatman, Janet E.
Bobbs, Maxine M.
Bode, Terri (2)
Boden, Lora Lei
Boehard, Pam & Steve
Boender, David & Vera
Boerger, Mr. & Mrs. Gaylord
Boersma, Susanne
Bollenger, Christopher
Bollinger, Kelley
Bollinger, Mindy
Bolton, Tammy
Boman, Elizabeth E.
Boman, Michael L.
Bond, Cheryl
Bonner, Ruth & William
Booe, Tinka
Borisen, Sandra
Boske, Sally A.
Bostany, Joe & Janet
Bostran, Deborah
Boucher, Melissa
Boucher, Michael & Pamela
Boughton, Gail
Bowen, Jeanne
Bowden, Kathy (DuBree, Beth)
Bowers, Noah
Bowman, Craig E.
Bowman, M. Anne
Bowman, Ruth S.
Bowser, Daniel
Boyd, Linda
Boyd, Sally P.
Boyda, Laurel
Boykin, Gene
Boykin, Gloria
Boyle, Renee
Bracken, Steve & Tina
Brady, Matt & Shauna
Brage, Sue
Brandt, Thomas
Brandt, Thomas J.
Branson, Michelle
Brawn, Kathleen
Brayman, Dawn
Breedlove, Mary M.
Breen, James D.
Breihan, Jeannette
Brenner, Mr. & Mrs. Marc
Bressette, Bill & Susan
Brewer, Paige S.
Bridges, Helen M.
Bridges, Kimberly A.
Briggs, Shauna Lyn
Brily, Ronald L.
Brinton, Natalie, et al.
Brochu, Laurie A.
Brockman, Pam
Broderick, Janet
Brody, Diane
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Brooig, Heather
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<td>Chu, Mr. &amp; Mrs. Thanh</td>
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<td>Carnes, Aleta B.</td>
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<td>Carney, John W.</td>
<td>Chung, Cathy</td>
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<td>Claborn, Judy</td>
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<td>Burdoin, Erica M.</td>
<td>Carol, Cathy</td>
<td>Clantier, Debra</td>
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<td>Burke, Lynn</td>
<td>Carpenter, Cori</td>
<td>Clanton, Shane</td>
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<td>Burleson, Bill</td>
<td>Carr, Allan C.</td>
<td>Clark, Eileen</td>
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<td>Burmeister, Jack</td>
<td>Carrero, Helen</td>
<td>Clark, Jerry L. (and Favorite Hill</td>
</tr>
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<td>Burnam, Marvin</td>
<td>Carroll, Marilyn</td>
<td>PTA Members)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burns, Linda</td>
<td>Carroll, Tami, et. al</td>
<td>Clark, Lauren</td>
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<td>Burrell, Sissey</td>
<td>Carson, Renee</td>
<td>Clar, Leticia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burton, Diane</td>
<td>Carter, Carol J.</td>
<td>Clarke, William T.</td>
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<td>Burton, Lara J.</td>
<td>Carter, Joni</td>
<td>Clautrec, Francois</td>
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<tr>
<td>Busbee-Young, Lisa</td>
<td>Cartes, Deborah</td>
<td>Clayton, Debbie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bushie, Robin</td>
<td>Cartes, C.D.</td>
<td>Clement, Debbie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bushong, Laura</td>
<td>Carton, Robin</td>
<td>Clement, Steve &amp; Debbie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buster, Charlotte</td>
<td>Carver, Elizabeth</td>
<td>Clementz, Lisa A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bustos, Terrence</td>
<td>Casalina, Mary Alice</td>
<td>Clermont, Julie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butler, Caroline</td>
<td>Casey, Barbara</td>
<td>Cleveland, Bev R.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clevenger, Robin P.
Clibourn, John A.
Click, Eva H.
Clifford, Mrs. Alice M.
Cline, Terry
Cline, Sharon (Community Crime Prevention Council)
Clubb, Mary F.
Cnota, Carrie, et al
Cock, Vickie
Coffin, Kathleen M.
Coghill, Kathy
Cohen, Bonnie
Cohen, Mr. Mark
Cohoon, Edie
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Coles, Terry
Coleman, Bobbie & Curtis
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Collins, Jani H.
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Cone, Cynthia, et. al
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Cotswold Elementary School
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Crescent View Middle School PTSA
Crew, Aubrey T.
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Crystal Lake Elementary
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Cullen, Donna J.
Cullen, Trisha
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Cummings, Karen L.
Cummings, Shirley
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Cunningham, Kristen D.
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Dacar, Dale & Shelley
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Dailey, K.C.
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Damiano, Sandra L., et. al
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Gillespi, Karen (Garfield School, et.al)
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Hilliard Debra L.
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Hilmer, Par
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Hinson, Johanna
Hintzen, Cecily
Hippets, Sherry
Hirschi, Melanie et. al
Hiu, Michelle
Hladek, Pat
Hladilek, Pat
Hoang, Angela
Hoang, Linh
Hodge, Margaret J.
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Hoeck, Linda M.
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Hoffman, Virginia.
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Holt, Teri
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Honz, Penny
Hoogendyk, Michael J.(2)
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Horn, Lori H.
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Horn, Jean M.
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Horton, Mrs. Chester T.
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Houchens, Rob & Natalie
Houk, Lisa A. & F. John
Housward, Diana
Houston, Janet
Howard, Kyle
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Hoyt, Judith
Hubbard, Denise K.
Hubbard, Mary Ellen
Hube, Terri
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Huberg, Gail T.
Huberman, Susan
Hudak, Evie
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Hudon, Rayette
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Hudson, Jim
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Hughes, Missy
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Hulse, F.
Hulse, Jody S.
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Hummel, Betty J.
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Hummel, John A.
Humphreys, Ewell
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Hunt, Laura L.
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Hurst, Kathi, et. al
Husser, Joan
Hutchison, Kathy
Hutton, Susan
Huval, Lisa
Hyde, Frankie B.
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Hydis, Mr. & Mrs. Vincent
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Iannantuano, Anthony
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Icard, Glenda
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Imhoff, Vern & Cindy
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Janes, T.
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Jett, William M.
Jim Hill Middle School PTA
Jimenez, Alicia
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Johason, Jessica
Johnson, Beth
Johnson, Colleen, et. al
Johnson, Divina L.
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Johnson, Karen S.
Johnson, Lisa Rae
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Johnson, Sharon
Johnson, Sunny
Johnston, Bonnie & Mark
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Johnston, Maureen
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Joseph, Charlotte
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Kaminski, Karen
Kamp, Rhonda
Kanally, Laurie
Kaplan, Jeffrey B.
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Karpfen, Karen P.
KASN-TV (Miguel Copello)
Katz, Lisa
KAVU-TV (Jerry Larsen)
Kay, Erica
KBJR-TV (Robert J. Wilmers)
KCEN-TV (Gayle Kiger)
KDOC-TV (Charles Velona)
Keadey, Susan
Kealey, Walter G.
Keefe, Herbert
Keefe, Susan
Keegan, Pat
Keegan, Mary Ellen
Keegher, Thomas & Carolyn
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Keigler, Barbara S.
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Keller, Jeff
Keller, Mammie
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Kenworthy, Elizabeth
Kerr, Cindy
Kershishnik, Ron E.
Kerwin, Debra L.
Kesler, Helen
Kettenring, Vicki
Keyes, Joe
Kibbey, Sandy
KJEM-TV (Thomas J. Spain)
Kiker, Joni
Kilanowski, Ray & Cheri
Killion, Brittan Jaye
Kimler, Chad & Brenda
Kimble, Alison
Kimble, William
Kimmel, Denise
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King, Darlene
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KLRT-TV (Jerry Whitener)
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KOBI/KOTI-TV (Mark Logan)
Koedewyn, Kathy, et. al
Koellner, Therese C.
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Kohler, Colleen
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KPAX-TV (Robert Hermes)
KPHO-TV (John Smith)
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Krome, Jeanne A.
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Krumrey, Rev. George
Krutul, Ms. Anne
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KTBS-TV (George Sirven)
KTNV-TV (Peter Bannister)
KTVD-TV (Brian Jones)
KTXL-TV (Michael Fisher)
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KWCH-TV (Ron Collins)
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Latimer, Lowell F.
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Lauren, Olga
LaVangie, Diane
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Lawler, Nancy
Le, My, et. al.
Leander, J.
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Madsen, Pam
Magerkeeth, Rod & Debbie
Magleby, Dana
Maher, Linda
Mahy, C.
Maier, Donna
Maines, Blaine
Maines, Jean
Mainwaring, Carol, et al
Makely, Janice
Makeu, Debra
Makrey, Frances
Malbrough, Dave
Malizan, Carol
Maloney, Barbara
Maloney, Darlene
Malooney, Jared M.
Maltos, Sandy Jo
Mammifrod, Kathleen
Manansala, Patrick
Manion, Carole
Manley, Lucy
Mann, J
Mans, Stephen
Manyon, Evelyn
March, Audrey Ann & Harold
Mariani, E.
Marie, April
Marina, Jody
Markell, Ginny
Maron, Rebecca C.
Marquez, Mrs. Pamela A.
Marr, Elizabeth
Marrazzo, Vivian
Marsden, Margie A.
Marse, Carol J.
Marsh, Alan & Regina
Marshall, Nancy & Brian
Marshall, Cindy
Marshall, Mildred M.
Marshall, Lori
Martin, Vera K.
Martin, Cecilia
Martin, Jackie
Martin, Mark & Kim
Martin, Peg
Martin-Viana, E.
Martine, Nancy L.
Martinez, Donna M.
Martinez, Cheryl
Martodam, Rita Marie
Marx, Gary (Amer. Association
of School Admin.)
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Mason, Donald R.
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Massington, Mrs. Mary J.
Masters, Nelda
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Mastorakis, John
Mastrangelo, Elizabeth D.
Matheson Park PTA
Mathurin, Carol
Matsumura, Chikako
Matthews, Helen W.
Maturkanich, Patrice
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Matzinger, Dorothy M.
Maucotel, Audrey
Mauer, Kathy
Maunu, Carol M.
Maurer, Mr. & Mrs. Timothy
Mauricio, Roquel
Maxwell, Carolyn
Maxwell, Lee
May, Catherine L.
Mayberry, Shawn
McAllister, Barb
McAndrew, Anne S.
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McCafferty, Devani
McCaffrey, Jan
McCain, Rita
McCullion, Lucy C.
McCann, James S.
McCarthy, Kevin P.
McCaulley, Sylvia & Tim
McC Chesney, Ann
McClearn, Kathryn, K.
McCleary, Annette
McClellan, Janet R.  
McCleary, Diane  
McCourt, Dawn  
McCowin, Lisa  
McCoy, Margaret  
McCoy, Tracey  
McCreery, Mr. & Mrs. Don  
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McDaniel, Marvin  
McDermott, Kristen  
McDonald, Kelli  
McDonald, Sandy  
McDonough, Susan  
McDowell, Gretchen  
McFall, Robyn  
McFarland, Karen B.  
McFarland, Meg  
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McGill, Darlene  
McGlory, Mr. & Mrs. John  
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McKay, Douglas  
McKeever, Janice M.  
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McKie, Karen  
McKinney, Christine  
McKissic, Mrs. D.  
McLaughlin, Darlene  
McLaughlin, Deborah  
McMahon, Lois  
McManus, Illyana  
McMullin, Lynn  
McNair, Joyce  
McNamara, Susie  
McPherson, Gene  
McPhillips, Dolores  
McQuade, Karen A.  
McQueen, Jacquelyn  
Meador, Arlean D.  
Mecham, Dr. Steven R.  
Medrano, Jazelle  
Meeks, Robert & Ann  
Meinholz, Brenda  
Mellor, Ruth  
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Menchavez, Rich  
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Mendenhall, Angela  
Mendenhall, Julie  
Mendenhall, Mr. & Mrs. Ken  
Mendez, Myrna  
Menotti, Kathy & Robert  
Mense, L.W.  
Mense, Lynn  
Mense, Mary Ellen  
Mense, Teresa & Steve  
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Merz, Ray & Marilyn  
Mescher, Debbie  
Mescher, Keith  
Messamore, Nancy  
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Metzger, Lois  
Metzger, Julie  
Meyard, Helen R.  
Meyer, Jennifer  
Meyer, J.A.  
Meyen, Jill  
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Miceli, Janice  
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Mihalyi, Joe A.  
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Miketa, Midge  
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Miller, Carolyn  
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Miller, Sheryl  
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Mixon, J.B.  
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Montmuno, Yvonne  
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Moore, Evelyn  
Moore, Janice L. et. al  
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Moore, Tammy  
Moose, Linda A.  
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Morgan, Kevin M.  
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Morris, Herb & Lorene  
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Moseley, Melody
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Mulligan, Shirley
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Murphy, Maripett
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Myers, Taffnayne
Myers, Rebecca
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Nairn, Janice (w/disk) (Maryland Coalition Against Pornography)
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Naught, Ethel M.
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Neiburger, Sue
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Neilson, Ann
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Nelson, Dann, April, Brittany
Nelson, Joan M.
Nelson, Sue T.
Nelson, Roni G.
Nelson, Pamela M.
Nemec, Randy & Holly
Nesof, Darlene
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Newman, David L.
Newsom, Leslie B.
Newsom, Mary Thomas
Newton, Hallie J.
Newton, Suzanne L.
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Nicholson, Lynn G.
Nickerson, Charles & Patricia
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Nokes, Kim, et. al
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Nolan, Tammy
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Northrup, Shan
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Norton, Micki
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Olsen, Cali
Olsen, Teri
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Ostheimer, Kelly
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Randle, Veronica
Randozzo, John
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Rankin, Sherrey
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Reed, Diana
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Rees, Shirley J.
Reeve, Scott W., et. al
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Reynolds, Birdie B.
Reynolds, Nancy
Reynolds, Rev. Karen
Reynolds, Toni
Reynoso, Nora C.
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Rhoads, Pearl
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Rhodes, Beva M.
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Rhodes, Laura
Rhodes, Mary
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Rhoton, Dale
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Rich, Florence
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Rideout, Gretchen et. al
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Riner, Y. Madeline
Ring, Dr. Edward M.
Ringo, Margaret
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Ritchie, Kathryn V.
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Roach, Rocky
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Robinson, Janis
Robinson, Jeanne
Robinson, Nancy
Robinson, Nanette E.
Robinson, Kay
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Rocco, Debi
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Rodenburg, Regina
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Rollins, Faye
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Romani, Julie
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Rosen, Sharon & Rob
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Rosenberger, Tom
Rosenburg, Carrie
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Ross, Richard L.
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Rothe, Rachel
Rothmeyer, Marsha
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Roush, Sandra M.
Rowell, Ella
Rowland, Dorothy
Roules, Kenneth
Rowles, Norma Ruth
Rowley, Nancy
Rowse, Kitty
Rubenstein, Paule
Ruberto, Mrs. Marianne, et.al
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Rudd, Iain P.
Rudd, Mrs. Nay Lynn
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Ruiz, Susan
Rulec, Robert & Sandra
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Russell, Wynette
Russell, Nicole
Russi, Karen
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Salisbury, Susan et. al
Salisbury, Lucille S.
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Sandel, Mark
Sandell, Mark A.
Sanders, Mary L.
Sanders, Rebecca M.
Sanders, Laura and Carrel
Sanders, Betty L.
Sandigo, Alonso
Sandoval, Patricia
Sandquist, Bernadette
Sanko, Constance A.
Sansone, Cynthia
Santiago, Veronica
Santo, Morgan
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Sarno, Diane
Sasso, Christine
Sauceda, Christine
Saucier, Nancy E.
Savage, Pam
Savishinsky, Debra
Sayotovich, Dale
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Schaefstall, Deborah
Schantz, Ellen
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Scheurich, Cindy
Schiff, Deborah
Schimizzi, Rose Mary et. al
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Schlenmer, Mark W.
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Schmidt, Suzy
Schmidt, Joseph B.
Schmidt, Arlene
Schmitt, Christy
Schmitz, Kristen L.
Schnabel, Becky
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Schneider, Sister Mary Fabian
Schneider, Mary A.
Schneider, Michael A.
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Schwab, Judith
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Schwartz, Sylvia
Schwartz, Catherine
Schwerdt, Julia J.
Sclavi, Holly H.
Scordato, Kathy
Scott, Kim
Scott, Shirley
Scott, Dianne M.
Seabolt, E. Diane
Sedlack, Leandra M.
Seehafer, Ruth
Segal, Sandra
Sehuette, Cheryl
Semsch, Lee-Ann
Senter, Karen K.
Seper, Carol
Serafin, Katherine
Serrano, Lisa
Session, Ernest
Session, Marva
Sesto, Sue
Settimi, Gina
Sevigny, Lisa
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Shanks, Monica A. et. al
Shanks, Kathleen
Sharoni, P.
Sharpe, Mark C.
Sharpe, Irene
Sharpe, Charles
Shaver, Toni L.
Shaver, Joyce
Shaw, Dorothy
Shaw, Carolyn
Shea, Jan
Sheanshang, Julie
Sheehan, Maryann
Sheehan, Marta
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Sheldon, Andrea (Trad.Values)
Shelwren, Lois
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Shepherd, Suzanne
Shevatt, Lauri
Shevry, Mr. & Mrs. Silas
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Shields, Ruth A.
Shinn, Kay
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Shopkorn, Jana
Short, Deloris
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Simon, Joan
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Simpson, Ada E.
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Sintz, Terry & Linda
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Smith, Karen Ann
Smith, Samantha
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Smith, Ginny
Smith, Cathy G.
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Smith, Terrie
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Snyder, Tina B.
Snyder, Kelli
Soales, Carlos
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Solomon, Sharon
Soltis, Janice
Sommerer, Robin
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Sorenson, Michelle
Sorrows, Tim
Sorrows, Eileen
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Spille, Reinert
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Spratt, Maggie
Sprengs, Barbara A.
Springer, Mrs. Tami
Spurgen, Mrs. Betty
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Stanuszewski, Sally
Staples, Cheri
Stark, Gilda, et al
Starks, C.
Starr, Baxter, L.
Starr, Cynthia
Staton, Coni
Stauuffer, Nancy
Steadman, Yvonne
Steeg, Deborah L.
Steel, Jane
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Steelman, Janet
Steens, Harriet E.
Stefanec, Susan
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Steffen, Denise
Steffensen, Marriann
Stehty, Claudia et al
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Stewart, Marli & Wayne
Stewart, Jacoline
Stewart, Charles & Fran
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Stillwell, Mary, et al
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Stone, Ronnie
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Terneus, John Lee
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TerVeer, Karen
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Testa, Annamarie
Thai, Hai
Tharp, Bette Jo
Tharpe, Yolanda
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Toth, Brandy
Tovares, Deborah
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Tsioles, Dina
Tsuly, Ann
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Tunnell, Judy
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Upton, Denise
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Vay, Mr. et al (Francis McClure Middle School)
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Vazzina, Mrs. J.
Vega, W.
Veit, Carolyn
Vella, K.
Ventura, Adelaide, et. al
Venugopal, Carol
Verdon, Theresa
Vergara, Connilee
Vero, C.
Verrastro, Colleen
Vested, Marie
Viaud, Anita
Villeporteaux, M.T.
Villosenor, Marguerite
Visser, Carolyn L.
Vlach, Michael & Linda
Vladeck, Mr. & Mrs. Jil
Vogtman, Susan
Voliva, Sharon G.
Vos, Marie C.
Vose, Ann B.
Votlz, Kimberly
Vuernicz, E.
Waber, Patricia D.
Wachtlen, James
Wachtlen, Ellen
Wade, Kimberly
Wadhwani, J.
Wadzinski, Susan
Waggoner, Sherry
Wagner, Jim & Rita
Wagner, Diana
Wagner, Donna J.
Waitt, Beverly F.
WALB-TV (2) (Jim Wilcox, Bob Campbell)
Wales, Susan J.
Walker, Ruth G.
Walker, Mary Ann
Walker, Linda
Walker, Ed & Virginia
Walker, Gilbert W.
Walker, Karen J.
Walker, S.
Wall, Monica
Wallace, Patricia
Wallace, Al
Wallander, Mary Jo
Waller, Mary Frances
Walmsley, Lyne
Walsh, Donna Jo
Walsh, Diana
Walters, Debra
WAOW-TV (Laurin Jorstad)
Ward, Tiffany
Ward, Betty
Ward, Shari A.
Ward, Jeannie
Warnecke, M.
Warnell, Janet
Warsfield, Eileen
Washington Center PTA
Washington School PTA
Watermann, Jody
Watermen, Millie
Waters, Brandon
Watkins, Wanda
Watkins, Mrs. Peg
Watson, Mark & Beverly
Watson, Jill
Watson, Carolyn B.
Watson, Jill
Watt, Cathleen
Watt, Beverly
Watts, Pamela
WCCB-TV (Tarleton, Cullie)
WCLA-TV (Robb Gray, Jr.)
WCIV-TV (Stephen Brock)
WCS-PTA (James H. Smith)
WCYB-TV (Joe Macione)
WDIV-TV (Alan Frank)
WDTV (Mike Smith)
Weaver, Ms. Donna E.
Weaver, Mrs. Imogene
Webb, Mark, et. al
Webb, Barbara
Weber, Christine
Webster, Terri
Weghof, John, et. al
Weidan, John
Weigand, Debora (Missouri Assoc. for Family & Community Education)
Weinhan, Annabelle
Welch, Mrs. Carl
Welch, Helen
Wellbrock, Terry
Wellnitz, Sally M.
Wells, V.F.
Wells, Tracey
Wells, Andrew
Wendel, Jo
Wenstead, Wilma
Wentworth, Fredrick A.
Werd, Corky & Robert C.
Werner, Dana
Wertke, Elizabeth
Wertke, Elizabeth (2)
Weseloh, Anna Marie
West, Kathleen
West, Janice
Westbrook, Michael
Westbrook, Lee
Westmeyer, Mr. & Mrs. F.T.
Westmoreland, Jill T.
Westmoreland, Iris C.
WFTC-TV (Steve Spendlove)
WFTS-TV (Jim Major)
WGAI-TV (Louis Gattozzi)
WGAL-TV (Paul Quinn)
WGGB-TV (Mike Bock)
WGMB-TV (Damian Calato)
WGME-TV (Bill Stough)
WMBF-TV (Porter, Marshall)
Whech, Jonathan
Wheeler, Martha
Weighan, Renee
Whipple, Lori
Whitcomb, Carol
Whitcomb, Lynn
White, Sharon C.
White, Mary E.
White, Linda
Whiting, Marcia
Whitley, Dolores S.
Whitlow, Fenton
Whitlow, Elizabeth
Whitlow, Brenda
Whitten, Patricia
Whitten, Mr. & Mrs. Mark A.
Whitmore, Anita
WHNS-TV (R. Kent Replogue)
WIBW-TV (Kirk Black)
WICD-TV (Vann, Les)
WICS-TV (John Connors)
Wiebe, Sharon
Wieber, Gertrude
Wight, Colby & Anita
Wilbas, Phyllis
Wilcock, Gail
Wilcox, Patsy
Wiley, Diane L.
Wilinski, Mrs. Rosalie
Wilke, V.E.
Wilkerson, Cynthia
Wilkes, Mr. & Mrs. Larry E.
Wilkinson, Genevie
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<td>WMTW-TV (Kaufman, David)</td>
<td>Young, Jay &amp; Bobbie</td>
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APPENDIX C

Responses to Industry Submission of
August 1, 1997
(electronic mail correspondence not listed)

Comments
American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Psychiatric Association
Block, Robert S.
Children Now
Collings, Tim (Simon Fraser University)
Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association
Morality in Media, Inc.
National Association of Broadcasters, National Cable Television Association, and
Motion Picture Association of America
National Broadcasting Company, Inc.
National PTA
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Reply Comments
Kimball, Robert
National Broadcasting Company, Inc.

Informal Comments
Life Directions
Traylor, Pam
APPENDIX D

Industry Submission of
August 1, 1997
August 1, 1997

Mr. William F. Caton  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: CS Docket No. 97-55

Dear Mr. Caton:

We are formally notifying the Commission by this letter of certain elements we are adding to the system of parental guidelines that the television industry submitted on January 17, 1997. The additions we describe below are supported by television broadcasters, cable systems and networks, and television production companies. We are also pleased that the revised guidelines are supported by leading family and child advocacy groups. These supplements to the existing system of guidelines will be implemented, apart from provisions dealing specifically with the “V-chip,” by October 1 of this year.

We are attaching a description of the amended system and statements of the television industry and family and child advocacy groups concerning the revised voluntary TV Parental Guidelines, as well as the agreement between the television industry and the advocacy community concerning additions to the Guidelines.1

We are changing some of the descriptors associated with the six age-based categories of television programming and, in certain categories, adding symbols describing the type of material that is included in a particular program. The program categories we will use after October 1 are:

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1 We are also providing a copy of this submission and the attachments on diskette to the Cable Services Bureau.
The following categories apply to programs designed solely for children:

**TV-Y All Children** *This program is designed to be appropriate for all children.* Whether animated or live-action, the themes and elements in this program are specifically designed for a very young audience, including children from ages 2-6. This program is not expected to frighten younger children.

**TV-Y7 Directed to Older Children** *This program is designed for children age 7 and above.* It may be more appropriate for children who have acquired the developmental skills needed to distinguish between make-believe and reality. Themes and elements in this program may include mild fantasy violence or comedic violence, or may frighten children under the age of 7. Therefore, parents may wish to consider the suitability of this program for their very young children. Note: For those programs where fantasy violence may be more intense or more combative than other programs in this category, such programs will be designated TV-Y7-FV.

The following categories apply to programs designed for the entire audience:

**TV-G General Audience** *Most parents would find this program suitable for all ages.* Although this rating does not signify a program designed specifically for children, most parents may let younger children watch this program unattended. It contains little or no violence, no strong language and little or no sexual dialogue or situations.

**TV-PG Parental Guidance Suggested** *This program contains material that parents may find unsuitable for younger children.* Many parents may want to watch it with their younger children. The theme itself may call for parental guidance and/or the program contains one or more of the following: moderate violence (V), some sexual situations (S), infrequent coarse language (L), or some suggestive dialogue (D).

**TV-14 Parents Strongly Cautioned** *This program contains some material that many parents would find unsuitable for children under 14 years of age.* Parents are strongly urged to exercise greater care in monitoring this program and are cautioned against letting children under the age of 14 watch unattended. This program contains one or more of the following: intense violence (V), intense sexual situations (S), strong coarse language (L), or intensely suggestive dialogue (D).

**TV-MA Mature Audience Only** *This program is specifically designed to be viewed by adults and therefore may be unsuitable for children under 17.* This program contains one or more of the following: graphic violence (V), explicit sexual activity (S), or crude indecent language (L).
These refinements maintain the broad six-category structure of the system of ratings we previously submitted to the Commission and add symbols indicating the particular content of each program, as appropriate. Together, the category and program-specific content indicators will provide parents with information that will help them make informed decisions about what their children should watch on television.

The icons and associated content symbols will appear for 15 seconds at the beginning of all rated programming, and the size of the icons will be increased from those shown presently.

In addition, five representatives of the advocacy community will be added to the monitoring board which we have established to ensure that the Guidelines are applied accurately and consistently to television programming. This will provide input from representatives of parents and family and child advocacy groups about the way in which the Guidelines operate in practice.

Consistent with the operation of the TV Parental Guidelines since January, cable networks and television stations will supply ratings information to newspapers and publishers of printed and electronic program guides so that the ratings can be included in program guides. Also unchanged is the right of local television stations to substitute the rating they deem appropriate for their audience for ratings assigned by producers and distributors. The TV Parental Guidelines will continue to apply to all television programming except for news and sports and unedited MPAA-rated movies that are shown on premium cable channels. The latter will continue to carry their original MPAA ratings and the additional advisories currently used by several premium services.

Section 551(c)(1) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-104, requires the Commission to determine if “distributors of video programming have . . . established voluntary rules for rating video programming that contains sexual, violent, or other indecent material about which parents should be informed,” and that the industry-adopted ratings system is “acceptable.” As we pointed out in submitting the TV Parental Guidelines on January 17 and in comments submitted on May 8, 1997, the ratings system we adopted achieved Congress’ goals of providing information that would give parents an effective tool to control their children’s television viewing, a tool whose effectiveness would become even greater when the “V-chip” becomes available.

By adding information to the Guidelines, parents will have additional information to help them decide which television programs their children will watch. Parents who wish to prevent their children from seeing a whole category of programs oriented in theme or content to older viewers will be able to do so; parents who instead are interested in controlling their children's access to particular types of content will also be provided with the information they need. Each network or television station also will continue to have the right to provide additional advisories to parents when they believe their audience will benefit from particular information about a specific program.

When coupled with the "V-chip," the TV Parental Guidelines will allow parents flexible options to ensure that their children see only the programs that they deem suitable for them. The content symbols added to the ratings categories meet many of the concerns expressed in comments to the Commission, and the addition of representatives of advocacy groups to the Oversight Monitoring Board address the concerns of others that decisions about ratings should reflect input from outside the television industry.

The TV Parental Guidelines are voluntary and broadly supported by the television industry which has pledged to begin transmitting ratings information on line 21 of the Vertical Blanking Interval (VBI) within six months. While the Telecommunications Act contemplated that a ratings system would be incorporated into the "V-chip," Congress specifically eschewed any requirement that distributors of programming be required to use that system. The Commission is only authorized to require transmission of blocking codes "with respect to video programming that has been rated." 47 U.S.C. § 303(w)(2). The Conference Report emphasized that "the conferees do not intend that the Commission require the adoption of the recommended rating system nor that any particular program be rated." H. REP. NO. 458, 104th Cong., 2d Sess. 195 (1996)(emphasis added).

Program producers and distributors were thus explicitly left by Congress with the discretion to determine whether they will rate their own programming, subject only to the requirement that they cannot strip ratings information from the VBI. Congress undoubtedly adopted this approach to avoid the obvious constitutional questions that would arise if programmers were required to display government-approved messages about program content. Thus, whether certain program producers or distributors decide that they will not rate programs

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3 See, e.g., Comments of the Center for Media Education, CS Dkt. No. 97-55 (April 8, 1977); Comments of the National Association for Family and Community Education, CS Dkt. No. 97-55 (April 8, 1977).

4 See, e.g., Comments of Morality in Media, CS Dkt. No. 97-55 (April 8, 1977).
at all (as some did after the TV Parental Guidelines were adopted last December), or others do not utilize the additional content symbols, has no impact on the decision as to whether the ratings system adopted by the industry is “acceptable” under Section 551(e)(1).

In order to bring the full benefits of the TV Parental Guidelines to the American people, we urge the Commission promptly to conclude that this system is acceptable and to adopt the technical standards needed for its incorporation into television receivers.

Please direct any questions concerning this matter to Jill Luckett at NCTA, Jack Goodman at NAB, and Cynthia Merrifield at MPAA.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Valenti
President and CEO
Motion Picture Association of America

Decker Anstrom
President and CEO
National Cable Television Association

Eddie Fritts
President and CEO
National Association of Broadcasters

Attachments

cc: Chairman and Commissioners
Meredith J. Jones
Roy J. Stewart
Christopher J. Wright
Agreement on Modifications to the TV Parental Guidelines
July 10, 1997

1. **Content Information:** The following content information, where appropriate, will be added to all non-exempt programming to supplement the existing TV Parental Guidelines: in the TV-Y7 category -- FV for fantasy violence; in the TV-PG, TV-14 and TV-MA categories -- V for violence, S for sexual situations, L for language, and D for dialogue.

2. **Descriptions of the Guidelines:** Modifications will be made to the category descriptions as specified in Attachment 1.

3. **Monitoring Board:** Five non-industry members, drawn from the advocacy community and selected by the Chairman, will be appointed to the Monitoring Board as full voting members. Recommendations for appointment to the Board will be offered by advocacy groups and Monitoring Board members.

4. **V-chip:** The industry and advocacy groups will recommend to the FCC that the MPAA movie rating system and the universal television rating system be the only systems mandated for inclusion on the V-chip.

5. **Icons:** Larger icons will appear on-screen for 15 seconds at the beginning of all rated programming and through use of a display button thereafter.

6. **Assurances:** Attachment 2 reflects the agreement reached between the industry and advocacy groups on treatment of the relevant proceedings at the FCC and pending and future legislation.

7. **Research and Evaluation:** Independent, scientific research and evaluation will be undertaken once the V-chip has been in the marketplace.

8. **Effective Date:** Networks will begin to rate programming using the new universal television rating system by October 1, 1997. The industry agrees to encode and transmit the rating information in Line 21 of the vertical blanking interval within 180 days of the date of this agreement.
The following categories apply to programs designed solely for children:

TV-Y **All Children.** *This program is designed to be appropriate for all children.* Whether animated or live-action, the themes and elements in this program are specifically designed for a very young audience, including children from ages 2 - 6. This program is not expected to frighten younger children.

TV-Y7 **Directed to Older Children.** *This program is designed for children age 7 and above.* It may be more appropriate for children who have acquired the developmental skills needed to distinguish between make-believe and reality. Themes and elements in this program may include mild fantasy violence or comedic violence, or may frighten children under the age of 7. Therefore, parents may wish to consider the suitability of this program for their very young children. Note: For those programs where fantasy violence may be more intense or more combative than other programs in this category, such programs will be designated TV-Y7-FV.

The following categories apply to programs designed for the entire audience:

TV-G **General Audience.** *Most parents would find this program suitable for all ages.* Although this rating does not signify a program designed specifically for children, most parents may let younger children watch this program unattended. It contains little or no violence, no strong language and little or no sexual dialogue or situations.

TV-PG **Parental Guidance Suggested.** *This program contains material that parents may find unsuitable for younger children.* Many parents may want to watch it with their younger children. The theme itself may call for parental guidance and/or the program contains one or more of the following: moderate violence (V), some sexual situations (S), infrequent coarse language (L), or some suggestive dialogue (D).

TV-14 **Parents Strongly Cautioned.** *This program contains some material that many parents would find unsuitable for children under 14 years of age.* Parents are strongly urged to exercise greater care in monitoring this program and are cautioned against letting children under the age of 14 watch unattended. This program contains one or more of the following: intense violence (V), intense sexual situations (S), strong coarse language (L), or intensely suggestive dialogue (D).

TV-MA **Mature Audience Only.** *This program is specifically designed to be viewed by adults and therefore may be unsuitable for children under 17.* This program contains one or more of the following: graphic violence (V), explicit sexual activity (S), or crude indecent language (L).
July 10, 1997

The attached modifications of the TV Parental Guideline System have been developed collaboratively by members of the industry and the advocacy community. We find this combined age and content based system to be acceptable and believe that it should be designated as the mandated system on the V-chip and used to rate all television programming, except for news and sports, which are exempt, and unedited movies with an MPAA rating aired on premium cable channels. We urge the FCC to so rule as expeditiously as possible.

We further believe that the system deserves a fair chance to work in the marketplace to allow parents an opportunity to understand and use the system. Accordingly, the undersigned organizations will work to: educate the public and parents about the V-chip and the TV Parental Guideline System; encourage publishers of TV periodicals, newspapers and journals to include the ratings with their program listings; and evaluate the system. Therefore, we urge governmental leaders to allow this process to proceed unimpeded by pending or new legislation that would undermine the intent of this agreement or disrupt the harmony and good faith of this process.

Motion Picture Association of America
National Association of Broadcasters
National Cable Television Association

American Medical Association
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Psychological Association
Center for Media Education
Children's Defense Fund
Children Now
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Education Association
National PTA
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, July 10, 1997

WASHINGTON, D.C. --- The television industry has concluded a long negotiation with public advocacy groups and has come to closure on revisions to the TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES.

The following content information, where appropriate, will be added to all non-exempt programming to supplement the existing Guidelines in the TV-Y7 category -- FV for fantasy violence, in the TV-PG, TV-14 and TV-MA categories -- V for violence, S for sexual situations, L for language, and D for dialogue.

Leaders in Congress have said no legislation regarding television ratings, content and program scheduling should be enacted for several years, so that parents will have time to understand and deal with V-chips in television sets, a mechanism which gives them the ability to block out programs they may find inappropriate for young children. Additionally, advocacy group leaders have said this process should proceed unimpeded by pending or new legislation that would undermine the intent of our joint agreement or disrupt the harmony and good faith of the process just concluded.

We are grateful to Vice President Gore, to Chairman John McCain, to Chairman Tom Biley, Chairman Billy Tauzin, Congressman Ed Markey, among others, who were helpful throughout this process. We also wish to thank the parents of Peoria, Illinois who, in a May town hall meeting, shared with us their thoughts on the subject of television ratings.

As the industry declared on February 29, 1996, in announcing its plans to design parental guidelines for television, we repeat now: Parents will be the arbiters of these new TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES which will be implemented no later than October 1, 1997. Obviously, until there is a sufficient number of television sets equipped with V-chips in American homes, no evaluation can be properly conducted.
SEPARATE STATEMENT OF COMM. HAROLD W. FURCHTGOTT-ROTH

In the Matter of Implementation of Section 551 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996: Video Programming Ratings, CS Docket 97-55

It cannot be gainsaid that the First Amendment prohibits government from either abridging or compelling protected speech. In view of that fundamental constitutional principle, section 551 of the Telecommunications Act prudently provided an alternative to a government-created, government-policed scheme for judging the content of video programming: the establishment of a private, voluntary ratings system by video programming distributors.

Under section 551, if the Commission determines that such establishment has occurred, the provision of the Communications Act that creates governmental ratings guidelines, section 303(w), never takes effect. By this Report & Order, the Commission fulfills its limited statutory role of determining that the industry's ratings rules are "acceptable," section 551(1)(A), and that "distributors of video programming have . . . agreed voluntarily to broadcast signals that contain ratings," section 551(1)(B). Under the Act, our involvement in programming ratings is now at an end.

This Order should not be interpreted as a basis for future governmental efforts to compel adherence to the industry guidelines at issue in this proceeding. Once the government becomes involved in pressuring distributors to take part in this program, the program of course ceases to be "voluntary" in any real sense of the word. Participation on pain of governmental penalty is simply not willing participation. And forced participation in content-based regulation of speech runs headlong into the First Amendment, as the drafters of section 551 realized.

In this regard, I salute the courage and fortitude of those programmers, such as NBC and BET, who have resisted political pressure to effectively convert these voluntary guidelines into mandatory regulations. Whether these companies opt in or out of the guidelines is a matter between them, their colleagues in industry, their advertisers, and last but not least their viewers. In the end, programming distributors should look to their own viewing audience, rather than to government, to determine what type of ratings, if any, to employ. When programmers do so, they should be commended, not condemned, for their independence of mind. That, after all, is what the First Amendment is about.
In the Matter of Implementation of Section 551 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Video Programming Ratings, CS Docket No. 97-55, and In the Matter of Technical Requirements to Enable Blocking of Video Programming Based on Program Ratings, Implementation of Sections 551(c), (d) and (e) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, ET Docket No. 97-206

As I travel around the country, I hear again and again from parents who are concerned about what their children are being exposed to on TV. The facts support their concern. Children spend about 25 hours a week watching TV, more time each year than they spend in the classroom. And much of what they are watching is violent. By the time they complete elementary school, children have witnessed about 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence.

Parents want to protect their children from violent and other kinds of programming that they consider harmful. But the task is daunting. Nowadays there aren't just three channels to monitor, there are dozens. No parent can possibly know what's on all of them all of the time. And in this age of single parent families and families in which both parents must work to make ends meet, it simply isn't possible for parents to always be at home to monitor what their children are watching. These parents want and deserve the ability to protect their children as much as parents who are able to closely monitor their children's viewing habits.

Today's actions will give parents a modern tool to help raise their children in the modern world. Under the voluntary Industry rating system we have found acceptable, parents should be able to receive the information they need in order to determine whether an upcoming program contains sex, violence, offensive language or suggestive dialogue. When used in conjunction with the V-chip, parents will be able to prevent their children from viewing programming that they consider harmful, even when they cannot be home.

The V-chip will not relieve parents of the responsibility of determining what their children watch on TV. It will help them fulfill that responsibility. Those who urge parents to simply turn off the shows they do not want their children to see should welcome the V-chip. The V-chip is essentially a remote control device with a longer range. It allows parents to "turn off" programs that they believe are harmful to their children while they are at work, at a PTA meeting, or at a Saturday night movie. It will not be a substitute for parents; it will help parents do their jobs.

I commend the Industry for developing an Industry-wide consensus on its voluntary
ratings proposal. I also commend the Industry for its willingness to broaden this consensus by addressing some of the concerns that the public raised regarding its initial proposal. I note that there are still some entities, such as NBC and BET, whose decision not to participate in the current ratings system will make it more difficult for parents to program the V-chip using the Industry proposal. I am especially concerned that many parents might not realize that NBC -- one of the major networks with some of the highest-rated programming on television -- does not apply content-based indicators. Such a parent, for example, may attempt to block violent programming using the "v" content-based indicator without realizing that they may also have to select an entire age-based category in order to block violent shows on NBC. Once a parent selects an entire age-based category, however, he or she loses the ability to establish different age-based categories for different types of content (e.g., the ability to restrict violence to a TV-PG level while permitting sexual content up to a TV-14 level). In this way, a parent who attempts to compensate for the NBC approach by blocking out an entire age-based category may be unable to take full advantage of the Industry system. As parents begin using the V-chip, I am hopeful that all video programming distributors will perceive the public interest in making the V-chip a more effective and easy-to-use tool for parents to block programming that they deem harmful to their children.