



Grassfire.org Legislative Proposal ***Broadcast Ratings Decency Act of 2007***

Issue:

Currently there exists a very limited and voluntary television ratings system that no longer safeguards our children or meets the common decency needs of our nation. The ratings system is greatly weakened by the fact that most programs are not rated and the ratings system conveniently exempts advertising and promotions.

Advertising and promotions comprise 25-30% of the content of a typical half-hour or one-hour show and often represent the most offensive of content aired. For example, pharmaceutical companies (representing products like Viagra, Levitra and Cialis) and so-called neutraceutical companies (for products such as Enzyte) run advertisements with increasingly explicit sexual language that is clearly inappropriate for children.

These convenient exceptions render the voluntary ratings system impotent and powerless to protect our children and promote broadcast decency.

Proposal:

Grassfire.org, one of the nation's largest grassroots organizations representing more than 1 million citizens, is proposing legislation — the Broadcast Ratings Decency Act of 2007 — to ensure that our children are protected from the surprise of explicit adult content on television. This legislation would:

1. Extend the TV Ratings system to all programming. Every program that airs during daytime or prime time hours (6 am to 11pm) should carry a rating. The legislation would require both networks and stations to implement a ratings system on programming.
2. Apply TV Ratings system to promos and advertising. Currently, the voluntary TV ratings system does not apply to advertising. Our proposal is simple: the ads should match the rating of the broadcast.
3. Limit sexual performance ads to after 10pm.

Strategy:

Grassfire.org's strategy on this issue is three-fold:

1. Build grassroots support. Currently, Grassfire.org is conducting an online petition drive to rally 500,000 citizens in support of Broadcast Decency. From this base of support, we will inform and equip citizens to take direct action toward our goal of protecting our children with a ratings system that actually works.
2. Seek a private sector solution. Our first line is to seek private sector solutions from the networks, stations and pharmaceutical companies. We believe the potential of legislative action from Congress would prompt the private sector to take reasonable steps to protect our children from such unannounced adult content. A proposed bill and a hearing would be a good starting point.
3. Pursue public sector correction. In the absence of action by the private sector, Grassfire supports the "Broadcast Ratings Decency Act of 2007."

For more information visit Grassfire.org.