

America's Families are United:

Give Us Cable Choice for Decency's Sake

Dear Congress,

We, the undersigned organizations representing millions of concerned citizens across America, are writing today in support of efforts in Congress to give current and future cable subscribers the power to choose the programming they want through an "a la carte" offering by the cable companies.

Today, consumers are forced to sign-up and pay for the programming cable providers want them to take. Basic cable offerings still consist of channels that a large number of subscribers do not want and most certainly should not be forced to subsidize. Content on many of these stations are patently offensive, vulgar, violent and in many cases, obscene. Through an a la carte approach, subscribers could contract with the cable company for the programming that meets their needs and desires at a price that actually reflects the service for which they have subscribed.

The cable industry has launched a \$250 million effort to educate consumers how to "block" certain programming, but they just don't get it. While we will continue to engage directly against the purveyors of indecency and filth, we do not believe that cable subscribers should be forced to subsidize immorality just because cable operators contract to carry that type of programming.

Why must Congress act? Very simply, it is because the cable industry refuses to even consider programming options that would allow the consumer to pay for what they want, not for what the industry wants. Recently the head of the National Cable Television Association was asked if the industry would consider offering consumers "family friendly" program packages to subscribers. His answer was short but speaks volumes about the attitude of his member companies: "The answer is no." (*National Journal Technology Daily*, May 3, 2005)

With over 73 million subscribers, cable television is reaching almost as many homes as broadcast television. As a result of exclusive franchising agreements, cable companies act with the impunity one can expect from a monopoly that serves a hostage consumer. Competition is limited and advanced technologies that offer an alternative to cable service are not yet fully deployed.

We urge our elected officials to recognize the urgent need for decisive intervention on this issue. The cable industry will not even consider alternatives and is dismissive to the concerns of millions of subscribers. The time for action is now, and we look forward to working with you in support of our position.

Sincerely,

Cable companies are forcing American families to pay for indecent and immoral programming while raising the cost of our subscriptions to subsidize it – cable rates have increased 86% since 1995 according to the FCC*. That's why 23 pro-family, pro-decency groups have united to urge Congress to give consumers a choice.

*Concerned Women for America
60 Plus*

*American Association
of Christian Schools*

American Family Association

Association of Maryland Families

BAMPAC

Called2Action

Citizens for Community Values

*Coalition for Marriage and Families
Faith2Action*

Family Research Council

Florida Family Policy Council

Focus on the Family

Kids First Coalition

Morality in Media

National Abstinence Clearinghouse

*National Coalition for the Protection
of Children and Families*

National Law Center for

Children and Families

Christian Coalition of Ohio

Parents Television Council

Religious Freedom Coalition

Salvation Army

Vision America

Protect America's Families, Give Consumers a Choice

*FCC Report on 2004 Cable Industry Prices • Paid for by Concerned Women for America
1015 Fifteenth Street NW, Suite 1100 • Washington, DC 20005 • Phone: 202-488-7000 website: www.cwfa.org