

CONCERNED
WOMEN *for* AMERICA

Good afternoon, I'm Penny Nance, President and CEO of Concerned Women for America, the largest public policy organization for women in the country with hundreds of thousands of supporters spanning every state of the union.

The women I represent are mothers, grandmothers, aunts, daughters, and granddaughters who are increasingly frustrated with the current television and movie rating systems that have proven to be inconsistent and unreliable.

An effort that was presented as aiming to benefit the public has in fact developed, unsurprisingly, into a system benefiting those who control it, the entertainment industry. TV is more dangerous for families today than it was before this system was devised.

You ask, "Are programs with violent, sexual, or other content that may be inappropriate for children being rated accurately?" No, they are not. Graphic sexual scenes, adult topics, violence, and profanity are routinely rated as appropriate for children. And as this study shows, the networks have been adding more and more violence and profanity to primetime shows without adjusting the age-based rating to reflect those higher levels of adult content.

TV-14 and TV-PG ratings are routinely abused to peddle violent, lewd, and salacious content, to the horror of parents who are helpless once their children are exposed to the material without proper warning. This is, of course, an ideal business model which gives advertisers a much

larger audience, but it is most certainly not in the best interest of families.

“Are both the age and content-based ratings being correctly applied? Are the ratings being applied consistently, or is programming with similar content being rated differently?” Again, the answer to both these questions we hear from the thousands of women I represent is a resounding, “No.” Even the same shows are sometimes rated differently when broadcast on different networks. Many parents have virtually given up on the ratings system, increasingly asking for guidance from non-profit organizations like ours on whether a show is *really* appropriate for their children, whatever the networks say with their self-serving ratings. Parents feel the ratings line is always moving, and it is always moving towards more degrading material being acceptable for younger audiences.

And even if a show is found to have been wrongly rated, what are the consequences for the network? Are there any?

If a drug company mislabels a drug, they would face serious consequences at the hands of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). They would probably have to spend millions of dollars to alert the public in order to rectify their error. Why is this not the case here? In the case of the entertainment industry, it is even worse, because we know they are intentionally labeling these programs to push the envelope.

They intend to get away with as much as they can in order to maximize their audience, which equals profits.

This report from the PTC confirms that it is time for Congress to act.

The entertainment industry has been granted the chance it wanted to do the right thing by families and come up with a process that could empower citizens with the information they need to make the best decisions for their families. But it has taken advantage of the public, betraying our trust. It is time to put American families first.