



Statement of L. Brent Bozell, III

Founder and President of the Parents Television Council

on Cable Choice

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I'd like to thank you all for coming today, and I'd like to thank Concerned Women for America for commissioning this important public opinion survey. It shows exactly what common sense dictates, and exactly what the cable industry fears: consumers are demanding real choice. They don't want to pay for channels they don't watch. But more than that, they don't want to be forced to underwrite the obscene and indecent programming on those channels.

We've made some real advances over the past few months in the battle for control of our broadcast airwaves, but there's a new front in the war on TV indecency, and that's cable.

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware that the public will continue to be barraged with indecent content unless and until we also address the even more vulgar, even more violent and even more sexually graphic material coming into our living rooms through basic cable, which now reaches more than 85% of US households.

Basic cable has become a kind of Pandora's Box for families. Many parents welcome basic cable into their homes because it opens up a whole universe of family-friendly programming. There's the Disney channel, Nickelodeon, ABC Family Channel, the Discovery Channel, and more. They may not be perfect, but they are overall a welcome relief to the slime on television. But to access these educational and family-friendly networks, consumers are also forced to take and

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pay for channels they don't want and that actually make their job as a parent much more difficult. Now, in addition to trying to protect their children from the filth on the broadcast networks, they also have to try to protect their children from the much more explicit fare on MTV, FX, Comedy Central, Spike-TV, and the like.

The cable industry argues that parents have the option of blocking channels they don't want. But what kind of a choice is that, when they still have to pay for those channels? There is something terribly and fundamentally wrong with requiring consumers to pay for a product they don't want, and may even find offensive, in order to get something they do want. It's like a grocery store telling you that in order to buy a gallon of milk; you also have to buy a six-pack of beer and a carton of cigarettes. But that is exactly what the cable industry has been forcing cable subscribers to do for years.

Why should parents have to subsidize cable channels that undermine their core values and beliefs? Why should a parent who wants their child to benefit from educational programming on the Disney Channel or the Discovery network also have to underwrite programs like *The Shield*, which recently featured an episode in which a police captain was forced to fellate a gang member at gun point? Or *South Park*, which recently aired an episode containing the following, stomach-turning dialogue:

TV anchor: "Do you actually believe in heaven?"

Man: "If heaven is an 8-year-old boy, and the ladder is my penis."

Offering parents the ability to choose the channels they want, and to pay only for those channels, puts power back in the hands of the consumer and forces the producers of indecent or violent programming to fund their own raunch. These raunchy networks have been carried on the backs of American consumers long enough. It is time for this extortion to end.