

(July 27, 2006) Family Choice Cable Act Proposed

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Measure Would Require Indecency Standards or A La Carte Option

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As media companies and the Advertising Council today unveiled their \$300 million public service ad campaign promoting how the v-chip can help parents control what their children watch on TV, some Congressional critics, saying the v-chip system isn't enough, were proposing legislation requiring cable companies to offer ala carte choices to consumers.

U.S. Reps. Dan Lipinski, D-Ill., and Tom Osborne, R-Neb., proposed today the Family Choice Act, which would require cable providers to either adopt broadcast TV's indecency standards from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., offer an a la carte programming option where subscribers wouldn't have to pay for channels they don't want, or allow subscribers a "family tier" which wouldn't include programming unsuitable for kids between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. The family tier would be limited to programs not rated TV-Mature or TV-14.

The two representatives, while praising the new v-chip campaign, said that they don't believe it will work.

"The v-chip is something we applaud, but we don't think it is the ultimate solution," said Rep. Osborne.

Rep. Lipinski called the campaign "just an attempt to push this [a la carte] issue off."

The campaign was also criticized by Brent Bozell, president of the Parents Television Council.

The public service campaign was unveiled at the Senate Commerce Committee today by Jack Valenti, retired president of the Motion Picture Association of America, who said the media industry was coming together in a campaign that would be "an epiphany for parents." Mr. Valenti said parents who "truly care" would follow the directions of the campaign to show who's boss and use the v-chip.

Committee chairman Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, who had once talked of extending broadcast indecency standards to

cable then backed off, praised the campaign, saying the government could never legislate something similar because of First Amendment issues.