

(June 14, 2007) Lipinski Introduces Bill to Give Parents Family-Friendly TV Options

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Legislation Empowers Parents to Protect Children From Indecent Programming

WASHINGTON - Today, Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL) announced the introduction of The Family and Consumer Choice Act of 2007, a bipartisan bill that will make it easier for parents to protect their children from indecent TV programming, while not limiting anyone's viewing choices. Joining Rep. Lipinski in announcing their support of the bill were Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Kevin Martin, and representatives from a number of family and consumer groups.

"In today's culture, parents are increasingly worried that their children are exposed to obscene, indecent, and violent programming," Lipinski said. "While there is no doubt that parents are the first line of defense in protecting their kids, clearly they need more help. The Family and Consumer Choice Act provides this help, without limiting anyone's choices, and without imposing a single, one-size-fits-all mandate on providers."

Currently, consumers face limited choices and are forced to pay for many channels to which they would rather not expose their children. For example, in order to subscribe to popular educational, news, and sports channels they have no choice but to receive and pay for channels such as Spike TV. In addition, the "V-Chip" currently is of limited effectiveness. A 2003 study showed that only 15% of all parents have ever used the V-Chip and only 27% of parents could even figure out how to program it.

The Family and Consumer Choice Act of 2007 requires any cable or satellite provider to do one of the following:

- Apply broadcast indecency standards to their programming between 6 am and 10 pm;
- Allow subscribers to choose a real family tier of programming; a family tier is defined to include all the channels in the

Expanded Basic Tier, except those that have programming unsuitable for children between 6 am and 10 pm (programs rated TV-Mature or TV-14); or

- Offer an opt-out a la carte programming option, such that any channel a subscriber does not want to receive will be blocked, with the subscriber receiving a credit on their bill for the blocked channels.

This bill is similar to legislation Rep. Lipinski introduced last year.

"With so much to worry about in today's increasingly busy world, parents are asking for some help in protecting their children from TV material they find inappropriate," said Lipinski. "It is time for Congress to act for America's families."