

## SUPPORT FREE EXPRESSION ON CABLE TELEVISION AND THE INTERNET

In the coming weeks, several Members of Congress are expected to try to expand indecency fines on broadcast television and spread their use to include cable television and the Internet. This would mean many cable television shows, such as *The Sopranos* or *Sex and the City*, would need to change their content or face significant fines.

Cable television and the Internet should not be censored by the government since they are voluntary media: each of us chooses to watch -- or not watch -- cable television just as we decide which Internet sites to visit. The government should not place ill-defined restrictions on "indecency" on these mediums.

# Take Action!

**SEVERAL SENATORS WANT TO INCREASE "INDECENCY" FINES FOR BROADCAST TV.** The House of Representatives has already passed legislation dramatically increasing fines for "indecency" on broadcast radio and television. Several Senators intend to try to increase these fines and expand their use to satellite and cable TV as well.

**NO ONE HAS ADEQUATELY BEEN ABLE TO DEFINE "INDECENCY."** No one, including the Supreme Court, has offered a practical definition of what is indecent, leading to ambiguity and confusion.

**THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT CENSOR VOLUNTARY MEDIA.** The Supreme Court has made it clear that cable and satellite are different than the broadcast media because one has to make the choice to subscribe to the service. Expanding "indecency" to cable and satellite would be clearly unconstitutional, and would severely chill speech in that medium.



YOUR **FULL NAME**

YOUR **STREET ADDRESS**

YOUR **CITY, STATE & ZIP**

As your constituent, I urge you to oppose attempts to increase fines for broadcast television and to restrict free speech on cable TV and even Internet. I strongly believe expanding “indecentcy” fines and other censorship, especially to cable TV and Internet, is inappropriate since these are forms of entertainment that people voluntarily choose. I do not believe the government should restrict the free flow of ideas and information through these channels.

I have read that the House of Representatives has already passed legislation dramatically increasing fines for “indecentcy” on broadcast radio and television. I understand that some Senators intend to try to increase these fines and expand their use to satellite and cable TV as well.

No one has adequately been able to define “indecentcy.” Already broadcasters and speakers are very wary of running afoul of the FCC. For example, some ABC stations refused to air “Saving Private Ryan” during Veterans Day for fear of FCC “indecentcy” fines due to language contained in the movie. Increasing fines will further chill speech in order to avoid possibly ruinous fines.

Furthermore, the Supreme Court has made it clear that cable and satellite are different than the broadcast media because one has to make the choice to subscribe to the service. And, technology is available to block cable channels the consumer does not want in their homes. Expanding “indecentcy” to cable and satellite would be clearly unconstitutional, and would severely chill speech in that medium.

Once again, I urge you to oppose attempts to restrict free speech on cable TV and even the Internet.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this matter.

**SEND TO:** THE HONORABLE (**FULL NAME**)  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

THE HONORABLE (**FULL NAME**)  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515