

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JONATHAN S. ADELSTEIN**

Re: Implementation of the Child Safe Viewing Act; Examination of Parental Control Technologies for Video or Audio Programming, MB Docket No. 09-26

Parents across the country are locked in a near constant struggle to protect our children from a barrage of media programming filled with content they consider inappropriate. Too many parents feel like they are losing control, and they are frustrated by a relentless march of coarse material they view as too violent, too sexual, too commercial or too unhealthy for their children. Today, this *Notice of Inquiry* implementing the Child Safe Viewing Act of 2007 marks an important, first step toward relief and reinforcement for concerned parents nationwide.

I applaud Senator Mark Pryor and the leadership of the Senate Commerce Committee for their strong push to enact the legislation mandating this inquiry and subsequent report. In a broader sense, it is unfortunate that legislation was needed at all to compel the FCC to do its job. I called on the Commission in June 2008, to conduct the inquiry we are now undertaking.¹ Despite the Senate Commerce Committee's unanimous approval of Senator Pryor's bill in 2007, the Commission failed to act on its own. If the study had begun when the Committee first acted, or even when I called for it, it would be completed now instead of just beginning.

For too long, the Commission has been derelict in its statutory responsibility to promote a comprehensive *and* constitutional approach in dealing with the vast array of inappropriate material for children that does not rise to the level of our standard of indecency. This *NOI* represents a step in the right direction, as it moves us closer toward equipping parents with the knowledge and tools necessary to protect children through their development amid the cacophony of modern media.

V-Chip technology, one of the most important blocking tools available to all families, has been available for over ten years, yet many parents still do not understand how it works. Nor do parents fully understand the current "alphabet soup" of ratings and content description system. The shortcomings of the V-Chip and ratings system were all too apparent in the Commission's report to Congress on the effects of television violence on children. As I said in my separate statement at the time, the Commission's should have included a complete and thorough analysis of all parental control technologies, including their shortcomings, resources that are currently available to families and households, and real ways to improve them.² The time has come to rectify this shortfall.

As a parent of young children, I believe I speak for millions of parents when I say we are overwhelmed, fed up and looking for help from the government *and* the industry alike. In that most important role in my life, as a parent, I live with the need to take meaningful, commonsense steps to protect my children. My family, like millions of families with children, needs help in navigating this treacherously complicated electronic media landscape.

As Commissioner, it is my job to ask what the government can do about it. I fully realize that whatever we do, it will take the open-armed cooperation of the broadcasting, cable and especially consumer electronics industries. Blocking technology strikes a balance beneficial to all parties involved:

¹ See Speech, Jonathan S. Adelstein, "Stuck in the Mud: Time to Move on an Agenda to Protect America's Children," June 11, 2008, at 3. http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-282885A1.pdf

² See Separate Statement of Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein, *In the Matter of Violent Television Programming And Its Impact on Children*, 22 FCC Rcd 7929 (2007). http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-07-50A4.pdf

it allows us to protect our children while respecting the creative and expressive rights of content creators. Achieving one objective should not mean sacrificing the other. As I've discussed in my "Agenda to Protect America's Children," there are many steps that could and should be taken by government and industry.³

Our call to action is clear: we have to make parental controls easier to understand, easier to use, and universally acceptable. They should be as instinctual as many of the other aspects of parenting we use each day. It is my hope that this NOI launches more than a proceeding, but a consensus-building mechanism to develop a comprehensive set of solutions to protect America's children.

³ See "Stuck in the Mud: Time to Move on an Agenda to Protect America's Children," 5-8.
http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-282885A1.pdf