

There was no objection.

SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY FRIENDLY TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 184) expressing the sense of Congress regarding the importance of "family friendly" programming on television.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 184

Whereas American children and adolescents spend between 22 and 28 hours per week viewing television;

Whereas American homes have an average of 2.75 television sets, and 87 percent of homes with children have more than one television set;

Whereas there is a need to increase the availability of programs suitable for the entire family during prime time viewing hours;

Whereas surveys of television content demonstrate that many programs contain substantial sexual or violent content;

Whereas although parents are ultimately responsible for appropriately supervising their children's television viewing, it is also important to provide positive, "family friendly" programming that is suitable for parents and children to watch together;

Whereas efforts should be made by television networks, studios, and the production community to produce more quality family friendly programs and to air them during times when parents and children are likely to be viewing together;

Whereas members of the Family Friendly Programming Forum are concerned about the availability of family friendly television programs during prime time viewing hours; and

Whereas Congress encourages activities by the Forum and other entities designed to promote family friendly programming, including—

(1) participating in meetings with leadership of major television networks, studios, and production companies to express concerns;

(2) expressing the importance of family friendly programming at industry conferences, meetings, and forums;

(3) honoring outstanding family friendly television programs with a new tribute, the Family Program Awards, to be held annually in Los Angeles, California;

(4) establishing a development fund to finance family friendly scripts; and

(5) underwriting scholarships at television studies departments at institutions of higher education to encourage student interest in family friendly programming; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) recognizes and honors the efforts of the Family Friendly Programming Forum and other entities supporting family friendly programming;

(2) supports efforts to encourage television networks, studios, and the production community to produce more quality family friendly programs;

(3) supports the proposed Family Friendly Programming Awards, development fund, and scholarships, all of which are designed to encourage, recognize, and celebrate creative excellence in, and commitment to, family friendly programming; and

(4) encourages the media and American advertisers to further a family friendly television environment within which appropriate advertisements can accompany the programming.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and insert extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us today is also a statement on behalf of the Members of this body that we expect better television programming than perhaps what is being offered today to our children and our families to survive the ratings battle. The broadcast networks do spend a considerable amount of time trying to develop sound, family-friendly programming that consumers will watch. Unfortunately, all too often this type of programming does not receive the high ratings necessary to keep those series on the air. This is unfortunate, but the networks should not give up hope or stop trying to improve the quality of their TV offerings.

I am pleased that the House today has an opportunity to consider H. Con. Res. 184. I am hopeful that the other body will soon offer a companion resolution. I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) for bringing this issue to the attention of the Committee on Commerce. I am also hopeful that the Committee on Commerce members will have an opportunity to consider the impact of media outlets on the culture of the Nation in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN).

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding and for all the effort he has put into this and for coming to the floor today to support it. I would also like to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BLILEY), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) and the Committee on Commerce staff for allowing us to have this resolution come to the floor today in an expedited manner.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to join with the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) to introduce House Concurrent Resolution 184. The resolu-

tion is pretty straightforward. It recognizes the importance, as the gentleman from Michigan has said, of family-friendly television programming and the specific contributions of a new group called the Family Friendly Programming Forum and the efforts they are undertaking to make this goal a reality.

Recent events have intensified a national debate on child development and particularly the influence of popular culture on our children. We cannot overlook the important role that television plays in shaping the attitudes and the outlook of our Nation's young people. Studies show that on average children will watch between 22 and 28 hours of television every week which in many cases, Mr. Speaker, is about the same amount of time they spend in school.

And television is not only a powerful influence, unfortunately it is too often a negative one. Let us be clear. Parents should always have the final responsibility for regulating their children's viewing habits. But the simple fact remains that the number of family-friendly programs available, particularly during prime time, has been declining. Parents are looking for more programs that are appropriate for them to watch together with their children.

This resolution specifically supports the work of the Forum, an organization of 33 of the Nation's very largest advertisers who have recognized this unmet need in the marketplace.

The argument is sometimes made that family-friendly programs do not draw big ratings, that advertisers will not support them and that, therefore, networks cannot afford to carry them. The work of the Family Friendly Programming Forum is changing this perception. The major advertisers who are members of the Forum are taking specific steps, including a new annual awards program that recognizes excellence in family-friendly programming, the first of which took place in Beverly Hills, California just last week. The Forum is also making a financial commitment. It has established a development fund to finance family-friendly scripts. It is underwriting university scholarships to encourage students' interest in writing family-friendly programming. The Forum is also conducting a series of public awareness events, campaigns around the country, to encourage families to seek out new options during prime time.

Mr. Speaker, family-friendly does not mean dull. Good programming over the years, such as the 1999 Family Friendly Programming Forum Lifetime Achievement award winner "The Cosby Show" and the long-running "Home Improvement" demonstrates that television programming can be both appropriate and enjoyable for the entire family and very successful. There is a market for good programming of this

type. Frankly, the statement made by the advertising community through this forum about their interest in this kind of programming is to me very significant.

Mr. Speaker, as a father of three, I am all too well aware of the powerful influence that television programming can have on our kids and the need for more programming we can enjoy as a family. While Congress cannot and should not tell the television networks what programming to air, we can and should support efforts like the Forum's constructive, free market approach to promoting family-friendly television. That is what this resolution is all about. By passing it at the beginning of the school year as we are doing, we as a Congress are making an important statement about the need for more suitable programming on our Nation's airwaves for all Americans.

I commend the Family Friendly Programming Forum and the goals they are advancing. I urge adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 184.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I begin by complimenting, praising the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), who is the principal author of this resolution. I thank him for asking me to be his coauthor. This is without question an important statement for the Congress to make. After all, we do spend a considerable amount of time here in Congress criticizing the impact which the media have upon the culture of our country, especially as it impacts the children in our society, so I think that as the Family Friendly Programming Forum begins a process of trying to encourage positive, family-friendly television, that we should praise them.

This resolution does four things: First, it recognizes and it honors the efforts of the Family Friendly Programming Forum and other entities supporting family-friendly programming. Secondly, it supports efforts to encourage television networks, studios and production communities to produce more quality family-friendly programs. Third, it supports the proposed Family Friendly Programming Awards, development fund, and scholarships, all of which are designed to encourage, recognize and celebrate creative excellence in, and commitment to, family-friendly programming. And, fourth, it encourages the media and American advertisers to further a family-friendly television environment within which an appropriate advertisement campaign can accompany the appropriate programming.

Now, this Family Friendly Programming Forum is a project of the National Association of Advertisers, which includes some of our Nation's largest companies: General Motors, Procter & Gamble, Wendy's, Coca-Cola,

Bell Atlantic, Gillette and others. These companies are the life's blood of free, over-the-air television, because, of course, without advertising from these large companies, there can be no television because there would be no advertising that the networks would use in order to fund the production of programs that are run on every single community in our country. These network ads are critically important to the cable industry and to the satellite industry as well, and as a result they have tremendous leverage over the television industry in general, whether it be broadcast, cable or satellite. And so we should all applaud this effort.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) has, I think, done an enormous favor to each of us in bringing this resolution out because it will give us a chance to go on record in support of the kinds of initiatives that we would like to see large American corporations undertake to use their leverage in order to stem the trend towards more sex, more violence, lowering of standards, increasing the tsunami of words and images that assault the minds of young children in our country.

Now, this is a huge breakthrough. Back in 1993, I attempted to have a hearing on this issue, inviting the largest advertisers to come to Congress to discuss it. At the time, only AT&T was willing to come forward to discuss a strategy by which these largest corporations would advance this kind of a cause. So it is heartening indeed to see this broad coalition today come together. I think that the more that we come to realize that these advertisers have this clout as the broadcasters attempt to attract large audiences in influencing the kind of programming that is played on the air, that we are going to have the kind of influence that we would like to see, and, as the gentleman from Ohio said, private sector initiated, advertisers pressuring, encouraging broadcasters to do the right thing, because they, that is, those advertisers, want to be associated with the right thing, with that kind of programming.

□ 1545

As the Family Friendly Forum states in their mission statement: we support a wide range of programming options, and we will continue to advertise on shows that appeal to different target audiences, but we want to ensure the existence of a family-friendly television environment, particularly in the early evening time period.

And most importantly, they are establishing a development fund to finance TV scripts, underwriting scholarships for students interested in exploring family-friendly programming, and granting awards for excellence in this area. They held their first awards ceremony just last Thursday, as the

gentleman from Ohio pointed out. It is something that should be applauded and encouraged.

The WB Network has already taken up the challenge. In August, WB CEO Jamie Kellner and Andrea Alstrup, vice president of advertising for Johnson & Johnson, on behalf of the Forum agreed to identify writers to produce new scripts that will entertain and engage family audiences.

As my colleagues know, the V-Chip is an important device to have built into TV sets, and by the beginning of next year, that is, January of the year 2000, every television set that is sold in the United States will have a V-chip built into it. We sell 25 million TV sets a year in the United States. But the V-chip is really only a way by which parents, in programming it, can block out the programming they do not want their children to be exposed to. In no way can the V-Chip put good programming on the air.

What is happening here, what is being encouraged by the advertisers of the United States, is encouragement given to the networks, to the cable industry, to the satellite industry to put good programming on that parents can sit their children down in front of with the parent sitting there with them and watch as a family. It is something that should be encouraged. It is something that this resolution, I think, correctly identifies as just the kind of trend that we should be encouraging here in the Congress.

I want to again congratulate my friend from Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF).

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time. I rise in support of this resolution. I have long been an advocate for more family-friendly programming on television. American children spend much of their time each week in front of a TV, and it is important that at least some of the programs available to them are devoid of the gratuitous sex and violence that so frequently pollute prime TV. I really believe the sponsors should not be allowed their advertising deduction when they sponsor programming which is clearly over the line for family audiences. We in the House should be encouraging the television industry to clean up its act, and I am happy to support this resolution today.

Again, I thank the gentleman for having yielded this time to me.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution because it encourages TV networks, studios, and the production community to produce more quality family programs. In a time of extreme violence and graphic situations on television, I am proud to support this measure. We need to encourage any voluntary efforts by the entertainment industry to clean up prime time TV.

Traditionally, prime time television was concentrated in the early portion of the evening TV schedule—7 or 8 pm. During this time, families would watch television together, usually with dinner or shortly thereafter while the children were still awake. The programming that was aired during these hours focused on the family unit.

Recently, this trend has changed dramatically. Most of the networks do not air any family programming at this time, or such programming has been limited to certain nights of the week, such as Sunday. Gone are the days of an entire family sitting around the television set.

The traditional family programming has been replaced with violence, sexual situations and profanity. Thankfully, the industry's internal system of checks and balances has weighed heavily in favor of the family's return to prime time.

The Family Friendly Programming Forum, established this year by 30 advertisers, encourages the networks to develop family friendly programming for families to view together. In addition to encouraging more family friendly programming through advertising revenues, the Forum will establish a special fund to finance scripts written for such programming.

The Forum will also establish a scholarship program to encourage student interest in family friendly programming. Such efforts will send a powerful message to television producers, network executives and other advertisers that consumers deserve better programming for their families and that advertisers will be more selective in sponsoring certain programs.

I support this effort because families deserve to have a time to sit and watch television together. Parents should ultimately maintain control over the television and what programs are acceptable in the home, but the networks do have some responsibility to promote a more positive alternative to the sex and violence currently seen in prime time.

Advertisers are in the unique position to provide that internal check—advertising dollars that can send the message that parents want more programming geared for family viewing. I strongly support internal industry checks on television content and I support the efforts of the Family Friendly Programming Forum. I urge my Colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I do not have any further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional requests for time either, so I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 184.

The question was taken.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

UNITED STATES PARTICIPATION
IN THE UNITED NATIONS—
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations:

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit herewith a report of the activities of the United Nations and of the participation of the United States therein during the calendar year 1998. The report is required by the United Nations Participation Act (Public Law 79-264; 22 U.S.C. 287b).

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, September 13, 1999.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON
H.R. 1906, AGRICULTURE, RURAL
DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG
ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2000

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 1906) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I will not object, but I do want to take this time simply to point out that the minority was not told until a very few minutes ago that these motions were going to be made at this time today. We are in the situation where several of our ranking subcommittee members are not on the floor because they did not know this motion was going to be made. I do not think it is quite fair to them to proceed under this kind of a situation.

I recognize it is not the fault of the gentleman from New Mexico, so I will not object; and we have no interest in delaying the action of the House, but I would simply ask that in the future, action be taken to make certain that the minority is made aware in a timely fashion of the intent to make these motions at a time so that we can be prepared as quickly as possible in making the correct motions.

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBEY. I yield to the gentleman from New Mexico.

□ 1600

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, I share the same approach that the gentleman has because we were given the word at exactly about the same time that he had it. Thank God the word finally got here, but it certainly puts a lot of folks in a position of not knowing that it was coming on the floor.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments. I would simply say to the leadership of the House, we are trying to be cooperative on this committee on both sides. It is pretty hard to cooperate if we don't have prior notice.

The gentleman has indicated he hasn't had that notice either, and I think that's equally unfortunate.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. OBEY

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. OBEY moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the House and Senate on H.R. 1906, Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations for FY 2000, be instructed to provide maximum funding, within the scope of conference, for food safety programs at the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. SKEEN) each will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I will not take very long. The situation is very simple. The House bill is \$15 million above the Senate bill for the Department of Agriculture's food and safety inspection service programs, and it is \$5 million above the Senate bill for FDA food safety initiatives. We believe the public has a right to have total confidence in the safety of its food supply. It certainly, in some instances unfortunately, does not have that to date. We think that the numbers in the bill will be at least minimally affected in increasing our ability to assure a safe food supply for the American public and would urge, therefore, that the conferees be instructed to provide the higher of the two numbers in each account in order to do the maximum that is allowable under rules, given the difference in scope between the two bills, to assure that food safety is the highest priority in the bill as it comes back from conference.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.