

103^D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2888

To require new television sets to have built-in circuitry to allow viewers to block the display of programs rated violent.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 5, 1993

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. FIELDS of Texas, Ms. MARGOLIES-MEZVINSKY, Mr. OXLEY, Mr. SLATTERY, Mr. HASTERT, Mr. COOPER, Mr. GILLMOR, Mr. SYNAR, Ms. SHEPHERD, Mr. GLICKMAN, Ms. SCHENK, and Mr. TOWNS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To require new television sets to have built-in circuitry to allow viewers to block the display of programs rated violent.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Television Violence Re-
5 duction Through Parental Empowerment Act of 1993”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

8 (1) To the fullest extent possible, parents
9 should be empowered with the technology to choose

1 to block the display on their televisions of programs
2 they consider too violent for their children.

3 (2) Violence now touches the lives of American
4 children more than adults. From 1982 through
5 1984, teenagers were the victims of 1,800,000 vio-
6 lent crimes, twice the annual rate of the adult popu-
7 lation over age 20. According to the American Acad-
8 emy of Pediatrics, one of every 8 deaths among chil-
9 dren age 10–14 years old in 1990 was caused by a
10 shooting. Among teenagers and young adults, that
11 figure rose to one of every four deaths.

12 (3) Children watch an extensive amount of tele-
13 vision. It is estimated that a child watches approxi-
14 mately 22,000 hours of television before finishing
15 high school, almost twice the amount of time spent
16 in the classroom.

17 (4) The amount of violence on television has
18 reached epidemic levels. The American Psychological
19 Association estimates that the average child wit-
20 nesses 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence
21 before finishing elementary school.

22 (5) Three Surgeon Generals, the National Insti-
23 tute of Mental Health, the Centers for Disease Con-
24 trol, the American Medical Association, the Amer-
25 ican Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Psy-

1 chological Association have concurred for nearly 20
2 years as to the deleterious effects of television vio-
3 lence on children.

4 (6) Despite periodic television industry efforts
5 to reduce the amount of television violence, reduc-
6 tions in the level of televised violence have never
7 been long lasting.

8 (7) Parents who are working are unable to con-
9 stantly monitor the television viewing habits of their
10 children. Advanced television technologies such as
11 channel compression and digitization will allow the
12 expansion of channel capacity to levels even more
13 unmanageable for parents who want to protect their
14 children from televised violence.

15 (8) The major broadcast networks and a large
16 number of cable channels have agreed to place pa-
17 rental advisories on programs they consider to be too
18 violent for children. These parental advisories are of
19 limited use to parents if they are not watching tele-
20 vision with their children.

21 (9) The technology currently exists to equip tel-
22 evision sets at a nominal cost to permit parents to
23 block the display of television programs they con-
24 sider too violent for children. However, this tech-
25 nology will only be effective (A) if all television pro-

1 grammers send any adopted rating or warning sys-
2 tem electronically with the program signal, and (B)
3 parents are able to block the display not only of in-
4 dividual programs but to block out automatically
5 and simultaneously all programs with such rating.

6 (10) Congress calls upon the broadcast net-
7 works, independent television stations, cable pro-
8 grammers, and satellite programmers to protect the
9 parental right to guide the television viewing habits
10 of children by sending any adopted rating or warn-
11 ing system electronically with the program signal.

12 **SEC. 3. EQUIP TELEVISIONS TO BLOCK PROGRAMS.**

13 Section 303 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47
14 U.S.C. 303) is amended by adding at the end thereof the
15 following:

16 “(v) Require that (1) apparatus designed to receive
17 television signals be equipped with circuitry designed to
18 enable viewers to block the display of channels, programs,
19 and time slots; and (2) such apparatus enable viewers to
20 block display of all programs with a common rating. The
21 requirements of this subsection shall apply when such ap-
22 paratus is manufactured in the United States or imported
23 for use in the United States, and its television picture
24 screen is 13 inches or greater in size, measured diago-
25 nally.”.

1 **SEC. 4. SHIPPING OR IMPORTING.**

2 (a) REGULATIONS.—Section 330 of the Communica-
3 tions Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 330) is amended—

4 (1) by redesignating subsection (c) as sub-
5 section (d); and

6 (2) by adding after subsection (b) the following
7 new section:

8 “(c) No person shall ship in interstate commerce,
9 manufacture, assemble, or import from any foreign coun-
10 try into the United States, any apparatus described in sec-
11 tion 303(v) of this Act except in accordance with rules
12 prescribed by the Commission pursuant to the authority
13 granted by that section. Such rules shall provide perform-
14 ance standards for such blocking technology. Such rules
15 shall further require that all such apparatus be able to
16 receive the rating signals which have been transmitted by
17 way of line 21 of the vertical blanking interval and which
18 conform to the signal and blocking specifications estab-
19 lished by the Commission. As new video technology is de-
20 veloped, the Commission shall take such action as the
21 Commission determines appropriate to ensure that block-
22 ing service continues to be available to consumers. This
23 subsection shall not apply to carriers transporting such
24 apparatus without trading it.”.

25 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 330(d) of
26 such Act, as redesignated by this Act, is amended by strik-

1 ing “section 303(s), and section 303(u)” and inserting in
2 lieu thereof “and sections 303(s), 303(u), and 303(v)”.

3 **SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

4 The amendments made by sections 3 and 4 of this
5 Act shall take effect one year after enactment of this Act.

6 **SEC. 6. RULES.**

7 The Federal Communications Commission shall pro-
8 mulgate rules to implement the amendments made by this
9 Act within 180 days after the date of its enactment.

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