

104TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 306

Entitled the “Television Violence Reduction Through Parental Empowerment Act of 1995”.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 31 (legislative day, JANUARY 30), 1995

Mr. DORGAN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

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## A BILL

Entitled the “Television Violence Reduction Through Parental Empowerment Act of 1995”.

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 1995”.

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. 8. 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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