The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SESSIONS. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order at the conclusion of the remarks of Senator DORGAN, which he will commence at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR—S. 254

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, if I could, before he begins his remarks, I ask unanimous consent that Kristi Lee, my staff member for the Judiciary Committee, be granted the privilege of the floor through the consideration of this legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VIOLENT AND REPEAT JUVENILE OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY AND REHABILITATION ACT OF 1999

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 328

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise as a cosponsor, along with my colleague from South Carolina, Senator HOLLINGS, of the amendment he has just introduced, the Children's Protection From Violent Programming Act amendment.

That is kind of a long title. What it means is Senator HOLLINGS and I would like to restore in television broadcasting a period of time during the evenings when children are likely to be watching television, where the television programming would not be containing excess violence.

The reason we feel that way is study after study, year after year—in fact, for decades—studies have shown the excessive violence in television programming hurts our children. Yet, if you evaluate television programming during what would normally be considered family viewing hours in this country, you will find the language has become more coarse, words are used that were previously not used, that are not suitable for children. You will also find substantial amounts of programming violence, gratuitous violence, during those shows.

Some would say, what about censorship? I think there are times when it is appropriate for the Federal Communications Commission to establish a family viewing period in the evening where the television broadcasting would be more appropriate, more suitable for our children, when children are watching those programs. We already have an instance dealing with obscenity, and the Supreme Court has upheld the opportunity and the responsibility given the Federal Communications Commission to carve out a period in which certain kinds of words and obscenities cannot be used because it is inappropriate for them to be used at a time when we expect children to be watching television.

We believe the same ought to be true with respect to television violence. One might say, this is much ado about nothing; television violence is nothing new; it is really not very important. Yet that is in defiance of all the conclusions of virtually all the studies. By the time young children graduate from high school in our country, they will have gone to school in classrooms for about 12,500 hours of their lives. But they will have watched television for about 20,000 hours. They have sat in a classroom 12,500 hours and sat in front of a television set 20,000 hours. Regrettably, too many of them are more a product of what they have watched than what they have read.

What is it they are watching? Some years ago I sponsored a project with a college on the North Dakota-Minnesota border that created a television violence report card. Volunteers at that college watched television programs for an entire week and cataloged each and every program and produced a report card on what kind of violence on television was being portrayed to our children. If you simply condense what our children are watching on television—yes, even during what would be considered family viewing hours—it is quite remarkable.

Imagine if someone came to your door tomorrow and said: You know, you have two children. They are age 6 and 9. We would like to put on a dramatic play for them. We have a group of actors out here in our van and we have some stage props. We would like to come into your home, into your living room, and we would like to put on a little play for your children.

So they come in. In the living room they put on a play. In this dramatic play they shoot each other, stab each other, beat each other up. Blood runs freely. There is screaming, there is horror.

You would probably say to those actors: You are just committing child abuse in my living room, doing that in front of my children. What on Earth can you be thinking of? Yet that is exactly what happens in our living rooms with that electronic box, with programming coming to our children at times when children are watching television, programming that is not fit for children.

So the response they have is, turn the television set off. Easy to say. Of course, most homes have a good number of television sets, probably two or three in different parts of the homes. In many homes there are circumstances where the parents are attentive parents, good parents, who try very hard to supervise the children's viewing habits, but it is very, very hard to do.

In fact, if you were watching, one day recently, a television set that depicted the unspeakable horror that was visited upon those students in Littleton High School, in the middle of the live reports with SWAT teams and students running out of school, with the understanding that children had been murdered, in the middle of all that one television network took a break and on came a commercial—of course, louder than everything else because commercials are always louder—advertising that you really needed to pay attention to their next big program. The next program was ''Mr. Murder.'' You really needed to watch ''Mr. Murder'' because this was going to be exciting.

All of this, coming at our children in television programming, study after study points out, hurts our children. This is not helpful to children. It is hurtful to children.

Newton Minow, many, many years ago—1961 in fact—said, ''Television is a vast wasteland of blood, thunder, mayhem, violence, sadism and murder.'' He said, ''In 1961 I worried that my children would not benefit much from television. But in 1991 I worry that my children will actually be harmed by it.''

Television executives produce some wonderful programming as well. You can turn to certain programs on television and be struck by the beauty and the wonder and the information. I have sat with my children watching the History Channel, for example, or certain programs on the Discovery Channel. I should not begin naming them. There are some wonderful, beautiful things from time to time on television. But there are some ugly, grotesque things on television as well, some of which come through our television sets during times children are expected to be watching.

What the Senator from South Carolina proposes is very simple: to go back to a time when we had in this country a period described by the FCC as a ''family viewing period'' that would be relatively free of gratuitous violence being displayed in those programs.

Is that so extreme, so radical? Do we really believe that we have to hurt our children in order to entertain our adults? I do not think so. It does not make any sense to me. There is plenty of opportunity in a lot of areas to entertain adults in this country, but it seems to me perfectly reasonable that at certain times when you expect families to be watching with children in the household that we could try to reduce the amount of violence on television.

I understand that some will portray this as a terrible idea. They will say we now have some ratings systems, and the ratings will give parents the capability of better supervising their children's viewing habits. That is true. I commend the broadcasting industry for having ratings. Not all do. One of the major networks has declined. The ratings themselves have not been used very much.