

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 000666)

RESOLUTION

Urging the Federal Communications Commission to hold hearings to address public interest considerations for programming, especially as it relates to children and the disabled, and to further promulgate measurable standards that may be utilized by television broadcasters in exchange for their free use of the digital airwaves.

WHEREAS, An increasing number of graphic depictions of violence and sexually explicit programming, a disproportionate amount of commercial advertising and a lack of programming that addresses the needs of the consumers in general and more specifically, the disabled and children, exists; and

WHEREAS, The move towards digital broadcasting stands to provide the FCC with a unique opportunity to review the standards under which digital broadcasters operate; and

WHEREAS, Children, with the particular sensitivities associated with their age can not clearly distinguish between commercial advertisements and educational programs. A limitation of four commercials, no longer than sixty seconds per hour of children's programming would allow children greater access to the benefits of a particular program; and

WHEREAS, Many vital issues and perspectives of importance to the nation and the local community remain unexpressed and unexamined. Allowing for one hour of public affairs programming, exclusive of news shows, every day per channel with at least an equal emphasis on local issues and needs, including free and fair political discussion, should be aired in the most popular time periods rather than relegated to obscure time slots; and

WHEREAS, Informed parental decisions based on the provision of an uncomplicated, and clearly understandable, independent ratings system about the violent and sexual content of programs could be substantially improved upon through the increased information capability of digital technology; and

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WHEREAS, Consideration should be given to one public service announcement, not as a substitute for in-depth public affairs programming, for every four commercials, with at least equal emphasis placed on independent and locally produced PSA that address the community's local needs aired during both prime and peak viewing periods; and

WHEREAS, Support and channel space for Public Service Media should be specifically set aside. The process of reaching out to ordinary citizens and local leaders should serve as a station's guide to addressing the community's diversified needs through news, public affairs, children's and other local programming and public announcements. Public input, accessible to the disabled, should be available along with station reporting on public interest programming and activities during the year; and

WHEREAS, Capabilities for the disabled, including closed captioning and descriptive services that will allow those directly impacted greater access to programming should be phased in over the first few years of a station's ability to utilize digital technology;

WHEREAS, In light of digital airwaves an in combination with telephone and cable technologies, the ability to create many opportunities for the dissemination of information generates a corresponding obligation to consider the foregoing and other review standards for broadcasters. Such standards not seeking to abridge constitutionally guaranteed rights or unduly burden any class of broadcasters; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby urges the Federal Communications Commission to hold hearings to address public interest considerations for programming, especially as it relates to children and the disabled, and to further promulgate measurable standards that may be utilized by television broadcasters in exchange for their free use of the digital airwaves.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to the members of the United States Legislature and the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D.C.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the nineteenth of October, 2000.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Miller

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Goode, Reynolds Brown, Ortiz, Clarke, Tasco, Krajewski, Blackwell, Kenney, DiCicco, Cohen, Rizzo, Mariano, O'Neill and Nutter

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