

103<sup>D</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 2159

To require the Federal Communications Commission to evaluate and publicly report on the violence contained in television programs, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 19, 1993

Mr. DURBIN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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## A BILL

To require the Federal Communications Commission to evaluate and publicly report on the violence contained in television programs, and for other purposes.

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 port Card Act of 1993”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) Television is bringing an epidemic of vio-  
9 lence into the American home. 25 percent of prime

1 time television shows contain “very violent” mate-  
2 rial, according to the National Coalition on Tele-  
3 vision Violence.

4 (2) This epidemic has been growing steadily  
5 worse. Prime time violence tripled during the 1980’s,  
6 the American Academy of Pediatrics reports.

7 (3) Shows aimed at children are especially vio-  
8 lent. According to a University of Pennsylvania  
9 study, children’s programming contains over 30 vio-  
10 lent acts per hour, an all-time record.

11 (4) The average child watches 8,000 murders  
12 and 100,000 acts of violence before finishing elemen-  
13 tary school on television.

14 (5) The National Institute of Mental Health  
15 states that violence on television leads to aggressive  
16 behavior by children and teenagers who watch vio-  
17 lent television programs. There is overwhelming evi-  
18 dence that children tend to imitate the behavior they  
19 see on television.

20 (6) The growing international media market  
21 has put a premium on “action”-type television shows  
22 that require little verbal translation, making violence  
23 a major United States export to the rest of the  
24 world.

1           (7) It is not the role of government to tell peo-  
2           ple what to watch or broadcasters what to show, but  
3           the Federal Government should bolster the ability of  
4           families and communities to make these decisions  
5           themselves.

6 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF TELEVISION VIOLENCE RE-**  
7 **PORT CARD PROGRAM.**

8           (a) REGULATIONS.—The Federal Communications  
9           Commission (hereinafter referred to as the “Commis-  
10          sion”), shall, by regulations promulgated not later than  
11          6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, establish  
12          a program for—

13               (1) evaluating and rating television programs,  
14               with respect to the extent of the violence contained  
15               in those programs; and

16               (2) publishing such ratings in the form of a  
17               Television Violence Report Card.

18          (b) PROGRAM SELECTION.—Under the program re-  
19          quired by subsection (a), the Commission shall—

20               (1) select, within each quarter of a calendar  
21               year, at least 1 week for the Commission to evaluate  
22               the extent of the violence contained in each of the  
23               programs carried on any of the national broadcast  
24               television networks, or on cable television systems  
25               (in the case of programs available to a substantial

1 percentage of the households that subscribe to cable  
2 television service nationally), during that week's  
3 prime-time and Saturday morning time slots; and

4 (2) ensure that at least 1 of the weeks selected  
5 under paragraph (1) in any calendar year is a  
6 sweeps week.

7 (c) VIOLENCE RATINGS OF PROGRAMS AND SPON-  
8 SORS.—After evaluating the television programs described  
9 in subsection (c), and in accordance with criteria estab-  
10 lished by the regulations promulgated under this section,  
11 the Commission shall—

12 (1) rate those programs in terms of the extent  
13 of the violence they contain; and

14 (2) rate program sponsors in terms of the ex-  
15 tent to which they sponsor television programs that  
16 contain a high degree of violence.

17 (d) REPORT CARD.—In the quarter following any  
18 quarter for which the Commission has made evaluations  
19 under this section, the Commission shall publish in the  
20 Federal Register a Television Violence Report Card that  
21 reports the violence ratings by the Commission under sub-  
22 section (c) of the programs so evaluated and the sponsors  
23 of those programs.

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