FROM IMUS TO INDUSTRY: THE BUSINESS OF STEREOTYPES AND DEGRADING IMAGES

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRADE, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

OF THE

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[1] Mr. Miller did not submit a prepared statement for the record.
[2] Mr. Dyson did not submit a prepared statement for the record.

FROM IMUS TO INDUSTRY: THE BUSINESS OF STEREOTYPES AND DEGRADING IMAGES

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRADE,
AND CONSUMER PROTECTION,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2123 of the Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Bobby L. Rush (chairman) presiding.

Members present: Representatives Schakowsky, Butterfield, Barrow, Markey, Towns, Gonzalez, Hooley, Weiner, Stearns, Fossella, Radanovich, Pitts, Bono, Terry, Myrick, Burgess, and Blackburn.

Staff present: Consuela Washington, Christian Fjeld, Valerie Baron, William Carty, and Chad Grant.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOBBY L. RUSH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Mr. RUSH. The committee will come to order. The Chair recognizes himself for 5 minutes for an opening statement. I want to begin by thanking our witnesses who have come from far and near to be a part of this hearing, and I want to assure everyone present that this hearing is not a head-hunting hearing. This hearing will be a positive hearing. I hope to come away from this hearing on this day with a foundation to move forward in our Nation. This is not the end. This is just the beginning.

We have a crisis in our communities throughout this Nation. There is a culture of death that permeates our society. It is the responsibility of this Congress as it is the responsibility of each and every one of you to be a part of the solution as opposed to being part of the problem. So I am looking forward to developing and to engaging in a coalition of concern and compassion and commitment to address the issue of violence, hate, degradation that has reduced too many of our youngsters to automatons, those who don't recognize life, those who don't value life, and those who don't look forward to a future of hope in this life.

I have heard too many of our young people looking and expressing a future that ends before they are 25 years old. They don't think that they will live to be 25 years old, indeed some say as early as 22. They don't expect to see 22 years of age. The statistics according to the Department of Justice bear them out. The greatest cause of death for youngsters 18 to 24 years old is homicide in our

communities. I am not blaming anybody. We all are part of the problem, and we all must be part of the solution.

This hearing is not anti-hip hop. Let me be real clear. I am a fan of hip hop. I have got children who love hip hop. I admire and respect the hip hop artists who have created an art work, an industry, and an environment where they can employ thousands of people who might not have received employment opportunities were it not for them. I respect the first amendment, and I know that great art is always controversial, but we must also take responsibility in our freedom of expression.

I want to conclude by saying and stating the obvious, that the pendulum is beginning to swing, and I am convinced that so-called gangster rap and misogyny is on its way out of the hip hop culture. This committee has a profound responsibility, immense jurisdiction, and it is within the purview and the power of this committee and has to be within the purpose of this committee to make sure that we engage in a conversation that deals with this issue that confronts the fabric of this Nation and threatens the fabric of this Nation, its families, its communities, its institution, indeed its foundation. We can do no more or nothing greater than to open up this discussion, remove the biases, the hypocrisies, and the hype. We have got to have an honest discussion. Our future depends on it.

I yield now to the ranking member, my friend from Florida, Mr. Stearns, for 5 minutes.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CLIFF STEARNS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. STEARNS. Good morning. And, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to echo your sincere comments that you speak from the heart. We all have interest in this subject, and I want to thank you for calling this hearing.

Looking at the witness list on panel 1, and looking at all these CEOs, we can certainly appreciate how much their hourly rate together would be for their time, so we appreciate you taking your time to come to speak to us this morning. The chairman talked about the violence, the hate, and the degradation that exists, and why it continues to flourish.

I think it is worthwhile to discuss this in light of some of the entertainment we see in a very small segment but an important segment, and obviously it is disappointing for Members of Congress to have to have this issue brought before us in terms of decency in our civil society, and to see how it continually profoundly affects our country. But this committee has jurisdiction in this area. We should be looking at this. I had a hearing when I was chairman of this subcommittee dealing with the video game industry and how it impacted our children, and many of you will note at that time that Grand Theft Auto was the subject of that hearing, and in particular a segment of that video game dealing with hot coffee which a portion of that was imported into the Grand Theft Auto to create pornography.

And I note that because of our hearing the video game industry seemed to respond to the pressure we provided and the outrage from the public and from this committee. In the wake of hearings

I held in the Congress last session the rating board has strengthened its review process and the industry is offering many new tools to parents to help them. Indeed, the Federal Trade Commission has found that the video game industry is policing itself from production to the retail stores. So I commend them for their good work, and I note, Mr. Chairman, that these hearings do provide pressure in themselves. Sometimes we look to perhaps legislate. Perhaps we look sometimes to influence, and perhaps this hearing will bring influence into this vital area.

Music and images can be powerful influences on our children's mind, and I think Congress has been down this road many times debating regulation of speech and commerce. Many of us wonder whether it would be appropriate for Congress to issue a legislative solution. I am not sure we are able to do it to this difficult problem. We are a nation founded on the principle, as you mentioned earlier, Mr. Chairman, of freedom of speech, and we are usually united in our efforts to export that core principles to countries and governments that censor their people and their media.

So obviously we don't want to ban the liberty and freedom—the idea of liberty of freedom of speech. We want to be able to have people to express themselves, particularly in oppressive regimes perhaps like China. But, however, there is today a lot of vulgarity in both the entertainment and the video game industry that we are concerned about which has a major influence on our children, and the problem is often a decision of what is package and what is market, but that primarily is determined by what sells, so a lot of what we see in our culture is perhaps something that these companies and other companies are providing because that sells.

Whenever it sells quickly it is imitated, and across the industry other people come up with new favorites. I don't necessarily believe there is a conscious decision to determine the content companies will sell before market analysis shows what is popular, and that is perhaps a key question of this hearing. Numerous examples demonstrate that consumers in the United States have certain tastes that the entertainers cater to. Content that does not sell usually disappears. However, there are other forms of entertainment that still survive and sell well. Nursery rhyme books, animated movies, and religious books all have their audiences and are produced precisely because publishers and producers know they will sell. It is rate that a successful business is set up solely to satisfy a market niche without some indication first that the product will sell and will be well received.

Business failures are often attributable to poor planning and poor research that never finds its market as big as it hoped. The successful ones are often the businesses that either know their market beforehand or readily adapt to it.

So in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I, like yourself, have some serious objections to much of the content that is sold and concerned about the effects it has on our society. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses and obviously asking them some pertinent questions on their opinions. Obviously, American consumers can make their own decisions, but they need information first, and perhaps the biggest thing to do is provide transparency for the con-

sumer so that certainly the parents know beforehand the product they are getting.

There is obviously another concern this committee has always had, and that is privacy and protection of the individual's privacy. And in many universities they provide broadband Internet for their students. Now a lot of these universities do not set up privacy safeguards so the music can't be stolen. I am happy to say that the University of Florida, that I represent in my district, works actively with the recording industry to stop piracy on their broad band networks so I hope more universities that university's indication and recommendation. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. RUSH. Thank you very much. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Illinois, Ms. Schakowsky, for 5 minutes for opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAN SCHAKOWSKY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILINOIS

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I too want to thank you for your opening statement both in its tone and its substance. I want to focus particularly on the treatment of women in our communities, and the role of corporations and the media and the entertainment industry and consumers in that treatment. Like everyone else, I am sure I want my granddaughters to be brought up in a society that values their worth and teaches them to be confident and empowered members of our community. I want them to grow up free from physical and verbal abuse. Unfortunately, we have not yet created a society in which that is guaranteed.

Girls and young women of color in particular are faced with repeated onslaughts of disrespect and bigotry. As we saw so dramatically with Don Imus' remarks even those who accomplish great things are not immune. All of us have a responsibility to work to end racism and sexism and bigotry in all forms. And I am glad that industry representatives, artists, academics, and women's advocates have gathered here today to begin a productive dialog. I believe that all parties at this hearing bear a special responsibility to insure that the culture in which our children and grandchildren grow up is a tolerate one. There are several fundamental questions here. What kind of culture do we want for our children? How do we determine whether certain words and pictures and values are appropriate? What is the Government's role? None of these questions is easy, which is why this discussion is so important, not just here but more importantly in communities and in homes across the Nation.

The sexist and racial stereotypes in much of today's media are culturally poisonous. Many of us see its effects in our neighborhoods every day. But the hallmark of an open society is the right to speak and to create art without governmental interference. Like Chairman Rush, I respect the first amendment, and I am wary of interfering in a way that stifles free expression. Censorship of media that we find offensive is a dangerous game. Who decides what music or movies merit fines or restrictions? Why, for instance, does Wal-Mart ban the sale of explicit music with parental advi-

sory warnings and yet continues to sell Grand Theft Auto in which players are encouraged to stomp on and rape women?

Government censorship would be equally arbitrary and it is a slippery slope down which I don't want to go. This hearing recognizes the power of entertainment and culture in our lives. I believe art both reflects and influences society. Artists and corporations need to understand that role and take it seriously. I don't believe in censorship, but I also don't believe that corporations should reap financial rewards by promoting intolerance and bigotry. Consumers too need to take responsibility. Consumers, we have seen, can have a major impact, as we saw on the pressure that resulted in the firing of Don Imus, with the growing demand for more positive lyrics and less violent videos.

I want my four grandchildren to grow up in a society that treats all of its members with respect but I am equally concerned with protecting their freedom of creativity. This is why I thank the chairman for calling this hearing and giving all stakeholders here the opportunity to start a dialog that can achieve both goals. I don't think that is impossible. I take this issue very seriously, and I look forward to the discussion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Mr. RUSH. I want to thank the gentlelady. The gentleman from Nebraska, Mr. Terry, is recognized for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

Mr. TERRY. Thank you, and I will waive.

Mr. RUSH. The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Butterfield, is recognized for 5 minutes.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I thank you and I thank the ranking member for arranging this hearing today. I understand that you had some difficulty in getting it arranged. You told me a few months ago that you were going to do it, and finally the day has come. And so thank you very much for your work in this area. In reading the material that we received in our offices a couple days ago, I noticed that the title of this hearing is "From Imus to Industry." I am not sure that that is the best title for this hearing. I wish we had had some discussion about that. We probably could have come up with another title that would have been less antagonistic to the industry, but having said that we are here today and hopefully we will have a productive hearing.

Mr. Chairman, Americans have forever enjoyed being entertained whether through music, movies or video games. These devices have made their way into the homes of nearly all Americans where music lyrics are mimicked, movie lines are quoted, and video game characters are emulated. Through these various media outlets stereotypes of exaggerated and women are at times degraded, and that is most unfortunate. Are these lyrics and images a sign of the times? Are the producers of these products merely responding to society's status quo or is our increasingly tumultuous society causing these offensive trends in entertainment.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that this is a cyclical problem. It raises larger societal issues than what is being addressed with this hearing. Music is playing a larger part than ever in American society. It is without question that the artists who perform these songs with questionable lyrics or suggestive themes pull from the personal experiences that they have had in their lives in order to arrive at their final product. Whether we like it or not, this is the culture that we find ourselves in today. I attended a hip hop summit a few weeks ago at A&T State University in my home State of North Carolina, and just on a few days notice there were thousands of students attending this hip hop summit. Some of those could not even enter the coliseum.

And so, Mr. Chairman, I fully believe in the first amendment. Certainly we all do. I have been in the legal profession for many years, many years as a judge, and years before that as a lawyer, and so I for one certainly believe in the first amendment right that we have under our Constitution. And so the chairman is correct, we must uphold the first amendment rights that we have in this country. Our society is nothing without the first amendment. With that said, however, I think the artists, and two of those artists are here today and perhaps more, they are here and they have the knowledge that millions of Americans would idolize them and imitate them and emulate them. And so they have an obligation. Yes, they have an obligation to record music and to make their movies and to make their videos in a responsible fashion.

The artists need to know that their positions are power and they have positions of power. If you think Members of Congress have positions of power, I want you to know that the artists have profound positions of power. They are attractive to our youth so their influence should be positive. The artists whose music we are exposed to on a daily basis are driven by powerful record labels and they too have a fiduciary responsibility to their stockholders to produce what sells. That is basic corporate law 101. Corporations are in the business of producing a profit for their stockholders, and none of us want to diminish that. But the record labels have a large responsibility and they have a responsibility to our society that they not sit idly by and allow these lyrics and the music video images from invading impressionable minds.

Studies suggest that exposure to media violence increases levels of aggression leading to increased crime in music and movie and video games that promote gang activity and crime and degradation of women have a direct impact on the way impressionable individuals lead their lives. The entertainment industry as a whole, the artists and the actors and the record labels and video game designers and large media conglomerates must work together. I have a daughter who is a hip hop executive, and I have told her on numerous occasions we all have a responsibility and an obligation to society, and so we must all continue to work together to try to solve the problem that we are facing today.

But the responsibility does not terminate with the industry. Parents and children and consumers must be vigilant about what they are buying for themselves and their families. The only way to solve this problem of stereotypes and degrading images in the media is to work together. That is the message that I am delivering today.

We must all work together and not engage in a confrontation. I am going to yield back, Mr. Chairman. I will submit my remaining statement for the record.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair thanks the gentleman. The gentlelady from Tennessee, Mrs. Blackburn, is recognized for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding the hearing. We appreciate this, and want to welcome all of our witnesses who are here from media, entertainment, academia. We appreciate your time. I especially want to give a welcome to Dr. Tracey Denine Sharpley-Whiting. She is from Vanderbilt University and will be with us on one of our panels today.

Today's topic, as you are hearing, is extremely sensitive. Many people have strong feelings regarding the lyrical and visual content portrayed in popular music, and these are not altogether positive. As a mother for my children as they were growing up, and I understand and share many of the concerns that you are hearing expressed here today.

However, there are equally passionate voices on the other side of the issue that cherish the purity of the creative process and view today's proceedings as an assault on a artist's first amendment rights. So I anticipate that we are going to hear from both sides of this before the day is done, and my hope is that we are going to have a better understanding and probably a bit more nuance perspective as we look at the issue going forward. After all, I cannot and will not begin to read back many of the lyrics written by the two gentlemen that are going to be on the second panel. They are obscene regardless of when they were written and to what audience they were directed. And in my opinion they do not deserve the dignity of this committee's time.

It raises a good question though for these individuals. Where and how did society fail you to the point that you would choose to write such filth? I find it very sad. I find it very, very sad that there would be such a societal failing that you would choose to write such filth. Yet, no matter what I think of the lyrical quality, I cannot and will not begin to consider legislative remedies that put on the slippery slope of silencing our Nation's creators. But that does not absolve policymakers, community leaders, and families from taking an active role in combating the pervasive influence that perverse misogynist and racially insensitive pop culture content plays in our society today. We must do our part in explaining to our children that what they see on TV and hear on the radio may not always reflect reality.

And the job doesn't stop there. Our friends and partners in the corporate entertainment industry must remain actively involved in the fight to promote artists and entertainer who carry a positive image. One of the things we have to remember is that as corporate executives—and you work with the understanding that choices have consequences. You also understand that your standards reflect the core values for your company. We will be interested in

talking about those core values. I do not pretend to fully understand the pressures that the recording industry faces today from epidemic piracy to the transition to the digital platform but I do understand that corporate leaders in the music business are our partners in helping to build a better community. They are rising to the challenge.

We will be interested to know what you are doing for charities and with charities and with education on how to properly use entertainment products. I also understand that much of the world forms their perception of America by what they see on the screen and stage and what they hear across the air waves. In this regard, you do hold the world in your hands. My hope is that you are going to handle it very carefully, and remember that with our great Nation perception is many times reality in the eyes of those beholders. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your diligent work. I look forward to visiting with our witnesses as we proceed through the day. I welcome them all, and I yield the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair thanks the gentlelady. The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Barrow, is recognized for the purposes for an opening statement for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARROW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you and Ranking Member Stearns for calling this hearing. I want to thank you for taking this subject on. There are some problems where the only thing worse than talking about the problem is not talking about the problem, so I commend you for your willingness to take this subject on. I can't think of anything I could add to your statement, Mr. Chairman, to set the stage for this, so in the interest of time, I am going to yield the balance of my time. I want to thank you once again for calling this hearing.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair thanks the gentleman. The gentleman from California, Mr. Radanovich, is recognized for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your efforts and Ranking Member Stearns, and appreciate the fact that you are holding this hearing today. As the parent of a 9-year-old daily interaction with my son, with people he meets, and things he sees and hears are constant influences on his development. Children are particularly impressionable and often do not understand the difference between fact and fiction, the real and surreal. Naturally I want to make sure that my son is not exposed to that which he is either not mature enough to understand or content that is just simply inappropriate for his age.

To be honest, some of the content available today whether in music, video games, TV or movies can be downright disgusting, and in my view is inappropriate for any age group. Certainly I don't enjoy it, and I also understand that there are things that I enjoy that other people do not. However, whether I like the content or not, we live in a country where the very foundation of our society rests on the freedom to express ourselves and that is something I hope we all keep in mind during today's discussion.

Fortunately, we also live in a time when there is an abundance of tools, technology, and messaging designed to keep the public informed of content and enable parents to control what their children are exposed to. TV shows now have a rating system that is prominently displayed during the show. Also, technology such as V chip are available through cable and satellite companies that allow parents to block certain shows that they may not want their children watching based on the show's rating. At the end of the day, no matter how many tools are available to control content the responsibility ultimately lies with the individual or the parent.

I recognize that there is room for almost every interest in the market place, and diversity makes it easy to filter who is exposed to what. One of my favorite public service announcements was created by the Ad Council in conjunction with industry leaders and broadcasting cable satellite as well as other consumer electronics community. The commercial starts with a model who walks into her living room with a Soprano-like character sitting in front of her, and mom says, "Remember last week when you hit Vinnie on the head with a shovel? Well, it was pretty graphic, too graphic for my kids, so I am going to have to block you." The *TVboss.org* ad is a perfect example of how the system should work with the tools that are provided to parents.

All the industries represented here today, and some that aren't, have made great strides and have gone to great lengths to address the concern of inappropriate content. My son loves to play video games. The gaming industry through rating systems and the ability to block certain games from being able to be played on my son's device has made my job as a parent more doable. I know that with a few clicks of a button I can insure only games with an "E" for everyone can be played on his machine. Whether it is the ability to block programs, producing edited versions of CDs or the diversity of having channels that you know all content will be acceptable for certain viewers, I commend the industry's foresight and innovation. The only thing I would ask is that as the market evolves, that technologies improve, keep giving parents more tools to make their job easier because I think we can all agree that raising a child in today's world is not an easy task.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the ranking member for holding what I think will prove to be a productive discussion between industry leaders, artists, lawmakers, and parents on how we can all work to continue to produce and improve the best controls possible that make my life as a parent more manageable. Thank you.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair thanks the gentleman. I want to just make a point. There is a fine line between the jurisdiction of this subcommittee and the jurisdiction of the subcommittee that Mr. Markey chairs, the Telecommunications Subcommittee. I want to remind Members that this subcommittee's jurisdiction rests with the content and the interstate commerce which includes products, CDs, video games, et cetera. The public airwaves are under the jurisdiction of Mr. Markey's subcommittee, the Telecommunications Subcommittee. Please be mindful of that. Ed is my friend and we don't want to battle over jurisdiction. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Weiner.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. WEINER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I too want to thank you for holding the hearing and the tenor of your opening remarks. There is almost no doubt that we are experiencing a coarsening of discourse in our country, an increase in the amount of violence and sex and degradation that is going on in our public consciousness and our public debate, and in the media that goes along with it. There is no doubt that for whatever reason the music industry is not creating and rewarding acts like Tribe Called Quest, and Grand Newby, and De La Soul, and acts that once upon a time celebrated a different type of conversation in the communities of our country.

There is no doubt that Dance Hall is also affected and other parts of music, and there is no doubt that the traditions of Studio One that created the Barrington Levys of the world and the Bob Marleys of the world have given way to the Buju Bantons of the world, the misogyny and homophobia that they communicate. There is no doubt that when you look at the artists that are being celebrated in the market place today, extraordinarily successful artists like 50 Cent, you see the promotion of records like Get Rich or Die Trying in some of the communities most ravaged by handguns, giant posters with the artist holding a handgun in his hand extended outward clearly sending a message and communicating a message that is a violent one.

But this is also the extension of a debate we have been having in this country for generations and generations. The names might be different but it is no different than the conversation we had about sex on television and curse words on television. I remember being shocked when I was a young kid and Alan Alda on MASH said "son of a b****" during a MASH episode. You would probably not be able to get through a Sopranos episode without hearing a curse word in every other scene. It is no different than the conversations we have had about all forms of communication and conversation. I don't know who is going to solve the problem. I don't know to what degree it represents a problem or the natural outgrowth of a vibrant market place of ideas. I can tell you we aren't. I can tell you Congress isn't. It is good that we are having this hearing to continue the discussion because it is important that we understand. Only when lines are egregiously broken and crossed like they were in the case of Don Imus do we really engage in this conversation. We go long periods of time before we are shocked at the consciousness and start thinking about it again.

I can tell you that we, an institution of 435 members of America's elite, most of us white, most of us well-to-do, most of us not exactly the creators of art, we are not going to be solving the problem. It is good for us to have the conversation. Ultimately it is going to most likely begin with the artists and their customers. I would have liked to see the first panel be the artists. I would like to hear a little bit about what are in the thoughts and minds of someone who creates are that is so violent, that is so misogynistic, that is so angry and coarse. I can tell you that most likely, and I

take some exception and disagreement with Mr. Butterfield, I think this is ultimately going to be a business decision.

I think when Chamillionaire makes a decision on his second record not to use the "N" word and not to use curse words to some degree it is a business calculation. To some degree he is saying what, the market place is pretty well occupied with people cursing and yelling and saying nasty things. Chamillionaire, who is clearly a very shrewd businessman, is saying, you know what, I am going to try to occupy a different place and see if there is a market place for people who want to exhale a little bit, let their shoulders slump because there is finally some music that doesn't say these things. He is clearly making a political statement, and this is what artists have done through generations.

I can tell you that it is going to be very easy for us to say, well, maybe if Universal didn't promote something or Warner didn't promote something or maybe if Viacom didn't put it in a video on MTV, although I must admit I haven't seen a video on MTV in forever, maybe then we will be able to solve this problem. But, there was an article in today's the Daily Swarm, which is a blog online that talks with the music industry, about Amazon's new service it is going to sell, MP3s. It had a remarkable statistic. It said they are going to have 2 million songs from 180,000 artists represented by 20,000 major and independent labels. So if you think that Mr. Morris or Mr. Bronfman or anyone can say, you know what, I think this is so violent, that is it, you are done, I am taking you off of my label, there are only 19,999 other places for those artists to go.

And we all are familiar with the idea that now one of the most important ways to promote your music is not to have a label at all, just go to the clubs with your CD. You get an influential enough DJ to play your music. Before you know it, you don't need a label at all. So it is probably not going to be Congress to solve this coarsening of society problem. It is probably not going to be the suits that represent the labels. I believe ultimately we need to have a conversation that includes the artists and their customers about why these messages are becoming so popular, why it is that it is so much the popular message. When the artist Shinehead, during the explosion of the crack epidemic, put out a record that was almost entirely devoted to the idea that crack was killing their communities. It sold. Maybe that will begin again. Maybe the Shineheads will emerge again. Thank you.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair thanks the gentleman. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Burgess, for the purposes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Chairman, I thank you also for holding this hearing. I agree this is an extremely important discussion that we need to have. The discussion needs to be in the board rooms. It is appropriate to discuss it in Congress, and quite honestly it is a discussion that needs to be had within the family, but I thank you for bringing it to the forefront of this committee. Now the topic of today's hearing, the business of stereotypes and degrading images, affects communities throughout the country. This past weekend

back in my district at Fort Worth, TX, I had the honor of hosting an economic development summit in my district. It really didn't take long for the conversation of this committee's hearing to come up.

A civic leader in Fort Worth, Mr. Eddie Griffin, who frequently engages me in conversation on a variety of subjects, he is, as he pointed out, a member of the Afrosphere Bloggers Association, we talked about this at some length and about the impacts that the art is having on his community. He sent me an e-mail yesterday knowing that this hearing was going to be happening, and I found his statement to be really very simple and very profound. He said, "We will use our collective powers to negatively impact the profitability of those companies who cross the line." Mr. Chairman, the Constitution wisely limits what we in Congress can do legislatively regarding what we may consider objectionable material in art or media, but consumers, and as a nation of consumers, we hold tremendous power and we can stop buying the degrading music and video games.

We all know that if there weren't a profit, if people weren't buying into the line of products then they would no longer be on the shelves in our local stores for purchase. As Mr. Griffin said, we, everyone in this room and everyone watching this hearing on television can collectively use our power of our individual purse to no longer make this a profitable business for anyone including the companies represented in this room. Some of the artists who are here with us today who pen the lyrics are the retailers who sell the depravities that come into our homes disguised as a simple CD or video game. It is really the most powerful recourse that we have.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Griffin also said in his e-mail that there is only so much that we as African Americans or other Americans can take. I personally don't think that we as Americans should take this type of performance art any longer. It is up to us as citizens to put an end to it. Mr. Chairman, it is my hope this hearing will help us do just that. I thank you for your leadership on this essential issue, and I will yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair thanks the gentleman for the brevity of his opening statement, and now recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Towns, for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. TOWNS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me thank you and Ranking Member Stearns for bringing us together and indicating that we must work together to find the proper balance, and I am a strong supporter of the first amendment. I am glad that these fine witnesses are willing to engage us in a discussion of the negative effects of degrading images and stereotypes in our culture. We all should have taken some responsibility to help combat the negative effects as we respect important freedoms. I believe this hearing will serve as an important function in that regard. I am especially pleased to see the video game industry represented here today as it continues to provide consumers with innovative technology and products. Over the course of my years on this sub-

committee, I have come to know the video game industry well. I know publishers like you, Mr. Zelnick, have contributed a great deal to the industry's overall success in building parents trust and the industry's voluntary rating.

In fact, this very subcommittee, as the gentleman from Florida indicated earlier, commissioned a report by the Federal Trade Commission on the practices of the industry. In that report released in April of this year the agency applauded a number of measures taken by the industry to increase parental awareness, retail enforcement and advertising best practices, and I salute you for that. The agency found that nearly nine in 10 parents are aware of the rating system that cut the number of minors who could purchase M-rated games nearly in half.

These findings support my view that the industry is taking responsibility for the product it makes and gives parents the supportive tools they need to make informed decisions about what games come into their homes. Regarding the media industry as a whole, there has been an explosion of options available to consumers. We have gone from three networks at PBS to hundreds of channels of diverse content. The main complaint these days is that there is too much to choose from rather than not enough. However, among all of the available content options there are definitely things that I don't care for. I am pleased that the industry has created a rating system that offers parents more information so that they can block degrading images from their kids. There should be a far greater effort to teach parents how to use these controls on their televisions.

There is surely something for everyone among the hundreds of channels and iPods and satellite radio programs and DVDs so watch what you like, and don't watch what you don't like. That is a pretty simple theory. As far as lyrics and adult content are concerned, it is a cultural conversation, and we need to be careful not to look like we are advocating censorship of artists whose creative expression reflects their lives and experiences. Those things are what shapes our young people's lives that experiences have forced them to think.

I am pleased that we have two successful artists here today to tell their stories. Let us make certain that we respect those important freedoms. This is a complicated subject matter, and the most important thing we can do is convene these forums and engage in a serious, civil conversation that heightens everyone's sensitivities to the problem, not the problem of rap music but the problems facing our community each and every day. This is not about legislating or pointing fingers at anyone. It is about a serious thought for dialog, and I thank you all for furthering the national debate in this forum, and it is really about working together to see in terms of what we might be able to do because you admit, and I admit, that there is a problem. On that note, Mr. Chairman, I almost yield back but I am out of time so I can't yield anything back.

Mr. RUSH. I want to thank the gentleman. The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Pitts, is recognized for 5 minutes.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will submit my entire statement for the record but I would like to make a few points. First of all, thank you for holding this important hearing, and thank you for your leadership on this issue. It is very much appreciated. A number of the images and actions, profanity, and overall messages promoted by the music and entertainment industries today are deeply disturbing. Violence, devaluation of life, the degradation of women permeate much of the visual and vocal products circulating in our market place. What people see and hear absolutely does affect them, and that is why marketers spend billions of dollars every year on media advertising. They know that people, particularly kids, internalize what they see and hear, especially when they see and hear it over and over.

Companies are in business to make a profit. That is clear, but is it only when there is a public outcry, for example, over lead tainted toys, that companies make changes? Or look at cigarette production. It took a long time for cigarette companies to admit that nicotine was addictive despite a plethora of cited evidence because they did not want to admit the health risk associate with their lucrative products. In terms of degradation in music videos and other forms of entertainment sadly profanity and violence do seem to sell well. Tragically when a product promotes violence it does impact individuals' lives and community lives, even our Nation's life. Take Columbine, for example. We know that the young men who took other students' lives listened to very violent music.

One of the songs they listened to repeats six times in one song, "If I had a shotgun, I would blow myself straight to hell." If a child listens over and over and over to lyrics of a song the message begins to sink in and becomes part of the perspective through which he or she views life. In addition to violence in general, a deeply disturbing message promoted by certain songs and videos treats women as objects, not people. These images foster an environment that can be permissive in terms of attitudes of domestic violence against women. Domestic violence statistics in our Nation are horrible, and incidents of violence across all sectors and economic levels of society.

According to the University of Minnesota's human rights library, "Domestic violence also contributes to other forms of violence against women. Women who experience violence at home may be more willing to look for and accept an uncertain and potentially risky job abroad placing them in danger of being trafficked." In 2004 there was a briefing in Capitol Hill focusing on domestic trafficking and sexual exploitation. The main panelists were not adult experts, but were five young women from various backgrounds who had lived through years of abuse both at home and on the streets from pimps, police officers, foster care, and others.

Even after receiving assistance, the girls were afraid to testify against the pimps who had caused such great harm in their lives because the men would only get 6 months in prison. The girls all knew of others who had testified but who had been beaten up afterwards or even killed. Basically, pimps are sex traffickers. Unfortu-

nately, the music messages we are discussing today promote domestic violence and trafficking in humans. Mr. Chairman, I strongly believe that the responsibility for messages promoted in a particular music album, music video, video game or the like lies at all stages of development and production. Artists, managers, producers, sales representatives, upper level management, and CEOs all bear culpability for the messages that are promoted and affect our youth.

There are those performers who are taking a stand to help stop promoting negative messages to our youth. I applaud them. I also commend our distinguished witness, Mr. Percy Miller, on his efforts to produce albums with positive message. We need more individuals like these. I look forward to hearing from our distinguished witnesses, and I yield back.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Markey, for 5 minutes.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. MARKEY. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I commend you for this most welcome inquiry and discussion. Whether it is rap or hip hop or any other musical genre, it is vital that artists can freely express their talent and convey their messages. This is true of any art form, the spectrum of what it is to be human, what the experience may be for a particular person at this time in history, and whatever circumstances they find themselves discovers following an expression in art. This should be celebrated and revered even if such art or messages occasionally make people uncomfortable.

What our popular mass media does, however, is to take certain artists' works and essentially put them on steroids. Quite often the art that is marketed and sold reflect the personal experiences of artists, their neighborhoods, and their understanding of the world in which they have grown up. On the other hand, some of the art that is chosen by large commercial companies for marketing back into such neighborhoods has the power to reinforce messages and bestow acceptability upon themes, actions, and words that no parent and no community leader would ever deem to endorse. Such products can be mean and degrading, and repeated over and over again represent an incessant undermining of human dignity.

It was brought into focus most recently for me by comments made by former NBA star Isaiah Thomas. In a taped video Isaiah Thomas said that if a white male referred to a white female by a vulgar term it would be highly offensive. If a while male referred to a black female by the same term it would also be highly offensive. But if a black male referred to a black female by the same vulgar term, Isaiah Thomas said it wasn't so bad. That is repugnant because he is such a role model for so many young people in our country. What a hideous double standard he is promoting.

This hearing is tapping into something that is long overdue. Like Isaiah Thomas' comments the subjects for this hearing indicate a moral failing. What responsibility do media companies exercise when they select artists and songs and videos to promote and to mass distribute. I remember when BET was launched. It was sup-

posed to be the black sophisticated educational and entertainment channel full of high-minded fare invoking the best of the Harlem renaissance and the great diversity of the community. Instead it became the lowest common denominator of cheap and tawdry music videos and other questionable programming.

I was encouraged to see today's article about some of the new programming BET will be putting out. That is wonderful. But, frankly, it has a long way to go to make up for such a long history of previous programming. And I understand that the music industry is prepared to make its rating system more useful to parents by implementing a mechanism whereby parents can block inappropriate songs. This is something that warrants much further exploration and implementation. In short, I hope that today's hearings result in a dramatic reassessment by media companies as to their overall responsibility and as to the criteria they use to select what they choose to promote and to air. I want to again commend Chairman Rush for calling this hearing, and I thank our witnesses for joining us here today.

Mr. RUSH. The gentlelady from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARY BONO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mrs. BONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your holding this hearing today on this very important topic. As you know, I have a connection to, and an affinity for, the entertainment industry, but as a mother and as a Member of Congress, I also have concerns about some of the entertainment products that are delivered to our families in the form of games, television shows, movies, and music. As a result, I believe the industry has a responsibility to provide parents with easily identifiable information and access to the best technology available so they as parents can decide what is seen in their households.

In many respects, the industry is addressing its responsibility through available technologies and parental notifications. It seems to me though that the true challenge is continuously connecting parents to this information. For that reason, I am pleased that you have convened this hearing. It is important that the subcommittee be a part of the national conversation about whether artistic expression can go too far and what too far is or said another way whether there are additional actions that entertainers and industry should consider in order to insure that they can continue to innovate, freely express themselves, and provide ample notice to consumers, particularly parents about the products being sold.

Of course, this debate has been going on for as long as there has been music or even teenagers for that matter. I remember a while back after a controversial appearance by Two Live Crew a conservative Republican senator from Florida made news and turned heads when he said, "Under our form of freedom of speech words are protected. Once we begin selectively defining which words are acceptable, we enter a slippery slope where freedom is compromised." And that senator had it exactly right. Last night when I was reviewing the panel's testimony, I was pleased to see that some of you made similar points. I was also pleased to notice that

you all seem to take this issue seriously and that you take your responsibilities just as seriously.

Our founders understood that we are healthier as a nation if we don't silence words that offend or provoke but instead use them to encourage the very dialogs and discussions like we are having today. I share this belief and am glad you are all engaged in a dialog with us, with your colleagues throughout the entertainment industry, and most importantly with parents. I would like to thank our panelists for being here today. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair thanks the gentlelady. I am just going to take prerogative right now. There are two people in the audience that I really have to recognize. One is my friend, Mr. Dick Gregory. He is in the audience. I want to thank you, Dick, for being a part of this hearing. And another struggling entrepreneur from this city, Mr. Anton Mohammed. Mr. Mohammed, thank you for your participation in this hearing. Now the Chair recognizes the witnesses. Again, I want to thank you for the generous use of your time. You have been very, very patient with us, and we certainly thank you.

And the Chair now recognizes Mr. Philippe Dauman. He is the president and CEO of Viacom, Incorporated. As we all know, Viacom is one of the largest media companies in the world and owns MTV network and Black Entertainment network, both of which feature music videos along with original programming. Mr. Dauman, you are recognized for 5 minutes for an opening statement. Thank you for your presence.

STATEMENT OF PHILIPPE P. DAUMAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, VIACOM INTERNATIONAL INC., NEW YORK, NY

Mr. DAUMAN. Thank you, Chairman Rush, and Ranking Member Stearns. My name, as you said, is Philippe Dauman. I am president and CEO of Viacom, home to some of the world's most iconic television entertainment brands including MTV, Comedy Central, Nickelodeon, Spike, Logo, and BET, as well as Paramount Pictures, which produces and distributes motion pictures across the globe. The success and popularity of these and our other entertainment brands is rooted in the innovative spirit of our organizations. Viacom has two of the most experienced, well-respected leaders in the business running our TV programming divisions, Judy McGrath, chairman and CEO of MTV Networks, and a 20-year veteran of the company, and Debra Lee, who has spent the past two decades at BET Networks, and today serves as chairman and CEO, each a trail blazer in her own right. Judy and Debra oversee diverse executive teams that are the stewards shaping the content of our channels.

We understand that with influence comes responsibility and we take our responsibilities seriously. We have a responsibility to entertain. If we fail to fulfill this most basic responsibility we don't have a business. We have a responsibility to speak authentically to our viewers. Our entertainment has to engage the audience. Believe me, this is no simple task. Boomers, generation X, progressives, conservatives, parents, children, and every race and ethnic background, we cover a lot of ground. The fact is that none of these distinct audiences is monolithic. That is why we spend a lot of

time, effort, and money researching what our audiences want. A one size fits all approach cannot succeed. That explains why "Juvies" a real-life portrayal of the juvenile criminal justice system, aired on MTV along side "The Hills" a show about affluent young adults living the good life in LA.

While on BET, you will see Sunday Best, a search for the next great gospel singer, as well as Baldwin Hills, a reality series focused on the lives of upper middle class African American high school students. Rather than stifling creativity in pursuit of consensus, we seek balance, a balance of content that entertains and reflects the full spectrum of our diverse audiences' interests but every show is not for every audience. This is why we have standards and practices that govern all of our programming and guide our ratings. Every show and every music video are reviewed by a diverse group of employees before they are seen on a lot of our networks.

We play no role in producing or creating videos. That is within the exclusive purview of the artists and record labels. We do, however, take a very proactive role, which is why some videos are edited and some are rejected. Once programming meets our standards it is given a rating. Videos are rated in blocks. Parents and viewers can then rely upon these ratings to make informed decisions and use existing technology to block programming they don't want or simply turn off the TV.

That brings me to an equally important responsibility, the responsibility to engage, educate, and empower our viewers. We continually strive to make a positive difference in our lives and in our world. This commitment is part of our DNA, and I am proud to say we do it very well. Some of our most successful efforts include Viacom's worldwide KNOW HIV/AIDS initiative, VH1's Save the Music Foundation, BET's HIV/AIDS Rap It Up campaign, mtvU's fight to raise awareness about the genocide in Darfur, and an exciting new venture Think.MTV, an online site designed to encourage and enable young people to get involved in public service, which launched just last week with the generous support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Finally, we have a responsibility to listen to both fans and critics, and engage in a constructive dialog that will help us fulfill all of these missions. That is why I am here today. And we don't just listen to our audiences and our critics, we provide a platform for their voices to be heard. That is why tonight BET will premiere the first of a three-part news special, Hip Hop vs. America, a wide-ranging, insightful discussion of the impact of hip hop on our culture. For nearly three decades, Viacom has created compelling, entertaining and, yes, sometimes controversial programming. But as you will see in this clip from Hip Hop vs. America, we intend to continue to engage our audiences in a productive dialog and create programming that reflects our dynamic popular culture.

[Video clip shown.]

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dauman follows:]

Testimony of Philippe Dauman
President & CEO, Viacom Inc.

before the

Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection,
Committee on Energy and Commerce

"From Imus to Industry: The Business of Stereotypes and Degrading Images"

September 25, 2007

Thank you Chairman Rush and Ranking Member Stearns for inviting me to participate in today's hearing on an issue of personal importance to you Mr. Chairman . . . our industry and society as a whole.

Our iconic brands are known across the globe, connecting with audiences through nearly 140 locally programmed and operated television channels and over 280 websites – reaching more than 500 million households worldwide in 160 countries and 32 languages. Brands that include: MTV, VH1, CMT, Comedy Central, Nickelodeon, Spike, Logo and BET, not to mention Paramount Pictures, which produces and distributes motion pictures across the globe.

These brands are home to some of the entertainment industry's most creatively brilliant minds. And I firmly believe that the success and unparalleled influence of our entertainment brands is driven by the creative control and freedom we provide to our divisional and channel executives.

The practical result of this independence is that programming choices are made by people whose job it is to know their audiences intimately and who can deliver entertainment that is compelling, engaging and authentic. The other practical result is that my testimony today is likely to end-up as fodder for parody on *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart or *The Colbert Report*. And as you all know, these often hilarious and sometimes biting shows are a far cry from C-SPAN.

When it comes to who runs our largest programming divisions, Viacom has two of the best, most experienced, and well-respected leaders in the business . . . Judy McGrath, Chairman & CEO of MTV Networks, and a 20 year veteran of the company; and Debra Lee -- who has spent the past two decades at BET Networks and today serves as its Chairman & CEO.

Each a trailblazer in her own right, Judy and Debra oversee diverse and talented executive teams that are the day-to-day stewards shaping the content on our channels. Collectively, they oversee the development of literally thousands of hours of programming a week. I am proud of them and their work.

As a company, but more importantly as a collection of individuals who work for Viacom and its entertainment brands, we understand that with influence comes responsibility. And we take our responsibilities seriously.

We have a responsibility to entertain. If we fail to fulfill this most basic responsibility, we don't HAVE a business.

We have a responsibility to speak authentically to our viewers – Our entertainment has to engage the audience. Believe me, that is no simple task when you consider the amazing demographic diversity of the core audiences that our brands reach. To put it in more familiar political terms, our channels must speak to:

red, blue and purple states;

to boomers as well as generation x . . . y . . . and next;

to progressives and conservatives – and everyone in between;

to working families, the middle class, and the wealthy;

to parents and children; and

to people of all racial, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.

Even more challenging, perhaps, is the fact that none of these distinct audiences is monolithic. That's why we spend a lot of time, effort and money researching what our audiences want. We understand that a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach cannot succeed.

That explains why *Juvies,"* a real-life portrayal of the juvenile criminal justice system, aired on MTV along side *"The Hills,"* a show about affluent young adults living the good life in Los Angeles. While on BET, you'll see *"Sunday Best"*, a search for the next great gospel singer, as well as *Baldwin Hills*, a reality series focused on the lives of upper-middle class African American high school students.

Although distinctly different, each show connects to its audience in an honest and authentic way.

But not every show or channel is for every audience. What's appropriate for primetime on VH1 is not meant for after-school viewing on Nickelodeon. And some things aren't appropriate FOR ANY OF OUR CHANNELS.

We have Standards and Practices that govern all of our programming, and every show and EVERY music video are reviewed by a diverse group of employees before they air on one of our networks. We also have guidelines that prohibit certain words and imagery in the music videos aired on our channels.

We play no role in producing or creating the videos – that's the exclusive purview of the artists and record labels. We do, however, take a very pro-active role in editing music videos, which is why you won't hear the "B" word or "H" word or "N" word in any of our music videos . . . nor will you see gang symbols or portrayals of violence and drug use. Although we take our standards and practices role seriously, we also believe that it is not our role to censor the creative expression of artists whose music often reflects the pain they've suffered or seen in their lives and communities.

Once we have ensured that programming meets our standards, it receives a rating – because of their abbreviated length, videos are rated in blocks. Parents and viewers can then rely upon these ratings to make informed decisions and use existing technology to block programming they don't want . . . or choose the old fashioned method and simply turn off the TV.

As elected officials, you know all too well that with different and sometimes conflicting interests can come controversy. And when you add creativity and artistic expression into the mix, consensus can become even more elusive.

What some find funny, others find tasteless. What is wildly popular within one demographic, may be viewed as insensitive or offensive to another. And what qualifies as artistic excellence to some may seem amateurish to others. Entertainment has never been – nor ever will be – about reaching consensus . . . particularly for a nation as diverse as ours.

Millions of viewers every day choose to tune into our programming or change the channel in search of something different. Creativity demands that we take chances. But we must balance that risk-taking with a responsibility to our audience and society as a whole . . . and we do.

Rather than stifling creativity in pursuit of consensus, we seek balance – a balance of content that entertains, reflects and speaks to the full spectrum of our diverse audiences' interests.

That brings me to an equally important responsibility: the responsibility to engage, educate and empower our viewers, particularly young people. We continually strive to make a positive difference in their lives and our world. This commitment is part of our DNA . . . and I am proud to say, we do it very well. Some of our most successful efforts include:

- Viacom's groundbreaking worldwide KNOW HIV/AIDS initiative;
- BET Foundation's "Healthy" Camp for Girls, which promotes healthier lifestyles through health literacy, nutrition, fitness, exercise, positive thinking, and personal responsibility;
- MTV's award-winning "Choose or Lose" Presidential election coverage;
- VH1's Save the Music Foundation, which just celebrated its 10th anniversary;
- BET's HIV/AIDS "Rap it Up" campaign;
- mtvU's fight to raise awareness about the genocide in Darfur; and
- an exciting new venture Think.MTV, an online social-networking site designed to encourage and enable young people to get involved in public service, which launched last week with the generous support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, among others.

Finally, we have a responsibility to listen to both fans and critics, and engage in a constructive dialogue that will help us fulfill all of these missions.

That's why I'm here today.

And we don't just listen to our audiences and our critics; we take it a step further and provide a platform for their voices to be heard. That's why tonight BET will premiere the first of a three-part news special, *Hip Hop vs. America* . . . a wide-ranging, insightful, and perhaps controversial, discussion about the impact of hip-hop on our culture.

For nearly three decades, Viacom has created compelling, entertaining and, yes, sometimes controversial programming. But as you'll see in this clip from *Hip Hop vs. America*, we intend to continue to engage our audiences in a productive dialogue and create programming that reflects our dynamic popular culture.

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Mr. RUSH. Our next witness is Mr. Edgar Bronfman, Jr., president and CEO of Warner Music Group. Warner Music Group recently separated from Time Warner, Inc., and owns the hip hop label Asylum Records under the independent label group. Mr. Bronfman, thank you for coming. You have 5 minutes for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF EDGAR BRONFMAN, JR., CHAIRMAN AND CEO, WARNER MUSIC GROUP, NEW YORK, NY

Mr. BRONFMAN. Thank you, Chairman Rush, and Ranking Member Stearns, and members of the subcommittee, on behalf of the men and women of Warner Music Group, I want to thank you for inviting me to testify here today. We at Warner recognize that we have a responsibility for the content we distribute and present to the public. Mr. Chairman, we welcome your convening this hearing and we hope it will allow us to engage in a thoughtful approach, a dialog among artists, media companies, community leaders and public officials, that is best able to examine an issue of importance and civic interest.

How we grapple with issues of humanity, including race and gender, ultimately comes to define what we, as a nation, stand for and who we, as a people, are. The history of our country is, in one sense, the unfolding story of how we have dealt with these issues. Often, artists who deal with the topics of race and gender in their works are seen as not only casting a spotlight on those issues but sometimes as being part of the problem themselves. Creative works in any medium, not just music, can be controversial. In fact, they are often intentionally controversial in order to shed light on a social problem and to try to bring about much needed change. Protest art, whether music, literature, or the visual media has played a long and distinguished role in the history of our country.

But we also recognize that some creative expression is capable of being more than controversial. Some creative expression can be offensive. At the same time, we recognize that sensibilities are individual by their very nature and what may be offensive or inappropriate to some is important and necessary to others. As a result, when evaluating the content we release the balance we have to strike requires us on the one hand to protect and defend an artist's freedom of expression. That is an activity we see as supporting not only our own business but also our Nation's principles. At the same time, we know that we must consider and very carefully consider the impact on our society of the content that we are offering to the public.

Striking the appropriate balance among these often conflicting values, interests, and concerns is a complex and ongoing challenge, and it is also a moving target. In the 1950s many people were deeply offended by Elvis Presley, and a decade later many more were scandalized by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. At various points in time, even entire musical genres such as Rock and Roll, Rhythm and Blues and Jazz were branded as the work of the devil. Thankfully, as years have gone by, those perceptions have been altered.

Public tastes and distastes wax and wane, which is why it is impossible to apply a uniform standard to any form of creative ex-

pression. However, to try and maintain our obligation as a responsible corporate citizen while dealing with these very complex challenges, we have developed and continue to evolve a set of practices to guide us. I would like to give you a brief overview of our practices regarding content. They begin with the creative process itself. The executives at our record labels maintain an ongoing relationship with our artists and their music. Our aim is not to create art or to censor it, but rather to assure that our artists are aware of the potential impact of what they have created.

We are very careful to consider any potentially offensive content, including matters of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or physical or mental disability. We also evaluate the societal context, cultural value and artistic merit of the creative work, as well as the reputation, background, personal history, and intent of the artist, as well as how the work relates to, and compares with other works. We label our content as explicit using RIAA guidelines to alert the public, especially parents and guardians of young people to the presence of explicit content.

Additionally, we offer edited versions of label product to our retail, broadcast and digital partners, so as to broaden the choices available to consumers. But reviewing our content is not a simple job for many reasons, not the least of which is that there are no absolutes. Every day we grapple with finding the right balance. Different people draw the line between acceptable and unacceptable in different places. What is acceptable when it comes to creative expression is often determined by our age or class, our education or religion, our cultural surroundings, perspective or profession to name but a few of the influences on our individual attitudes, and the line keeps shifting.

As I mentioned earlier, it is abundantly clear that what is deeply offensive to some people at a given moment in history can become with the passage of time not only acceptable but in some cases revered. So the message I with to convey to you today is this, we recognize our responsibility with respect to our content. It is one we do not take lightly. Meeting that responsibility requires a delicate balance of many complex and difficult issues, one that only be achieved through a constructive dialog among artists, the industry and the communities we live in and serve. And we are committed to being a strong and thoughtful partner in that dialog. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bronfman follows:]

STATEMENT OF EDGAR BRONFMAN, JR.

Chairman Rush, Ranking Member Stearns and members of the subcommittee, on behalf of the men and women of Warner Music Group, I want to thank you for inviting me to testify here today.

We at Warner Music Group recognize that we have a responsibility for the content we distribute and present to the public.

Mr. Chairman, we welcome your convening this hearing and we hope it will allow us to engage in a thoughtful approach—a dialogue among artists, media companies, community leaders and public officials—that is best able to examine an issue of importance and civic interest.

How we grapple with issues of humanity, including race and gender, ultimately comes to define what we, as a nation, stand for and who, as a people, we are.

The history of our country is, in one sense, the unfolding story of how we've dealt with these issues.

Often, artists who deal with the topics of race and gender in their works are seen not only as casting a spotlight on those issues but sometimes as being part of the problem themselves.

Creative works in any medium—not just music—can be controversial. In fact, they are often intentionally controversial in order to shed light on a social problem and to try to bring about much-needed change. Protest art—whether music, literature or the visual media—has played a long and distinguished role in the history of the United States, dating back to our Revolution.

But we also recognize that some creative expression is capable of being more than controversial. Some creative expression can be offensive. At the same time, we recognize that sensibilities are individual by their very nature and what may be offensive or inappropriate to some is important and necessary to others.

As a result, when evaluating the content we release, the balance we have to strike requires us, on the one hand, to protect and defend an artist's freedom of expression. That's an activity we see as supporting not only our business, but also our nation's principles. At the same time, we know that we must consider—very carefully consider—the impact on our society of the content that we are offering to the public.

Striking the appropriate balance among these often-conflicting values, interests and concerns is a complex and ongoing challenge. And it is also a moving target. In the fifties, many people were deeply offended by Elvis Presley and a decade later many more were scandalized by The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. At various points in time, even entire musical genres such as Rock and Roll, Rhythm & Blues and Jazz were branded as the work of the devil. Thankfully, as years have gone by, those perceptions have been altered.

Public tastes and distastes wax and wane, which is why it is impossible to apply a uniform standard to any form of creative expression. However, to try and maintain our obligation as a responsible corporate citizen while dealing with these very complex challenges, we've developed and continue to evolve a set of practices to guide us.

I'd like to give you a brief overview of our practices regarding our content.

They begin with the creative process itself. The executives at our record labels maintain an ongoing relationship with our artists and their music. Our aim is not to create art or to censor it, but rather to ensure that our artists are aware of the potential impact of what they've created.

We very carefully consider any potentially offensive content, including matters of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or physical or mental disability.

We also evaluate the societal context, cultural value and artistic merit of the creative work, as well as the reputation, background, personal history and intent of the artist, as well as how the work relates to, and compares with, other works.

We label our content as "explicit" using RIAA guidelines to alert the public—especially, parents and guardians of children and young people—to the presence of explicit content.

Additionally, we offer edited versions of labeled product to our retail, broadcast and digital partners, so as to broaden the choices available to consumers.

But reviewing our content is not a simple job. For many reasons. Not the least of which is that there are no absolutes. Every day we grapple with finding the right balance.

Different people draw the line between "acceptable" and "unacceptable" in different places. What's "acceptable" when it comes to creative expression is often determined by our age or class, our education or religion, our cultural surroundings, perspective or profession to name but a few of the influences on our individual attitudes. And the line keeps shifting.

As I mentioned earlier, it is abundantly clear that what is deeply offensive to some people at a given moment in history can become, with the passage of time, not only acceptable but revered.

So the message I wish to convey to you today is this: we recognize our responsibility with respect to our content. It is one we do not take lightly. Meeting that responsibility requires a delicate balance of many complex and difficult issues, one that can only be achieved through a constructive dialogue among artists, the industry and the communities we live in and serve.

We are committed to being a strong and thoughtful voice in that dialogue.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair thanks the gentleman. Now we will recognize the president and CEO of the Universal Music Group, Mr. Doug Morris. The Universal Music Group owns Interscope Records,

one of the most prominent, ground breaking hip hop recording labels in the world. And at the conclusion of Mr. Morris' opening statement, we will have to recess because there is a vote on the floor, and we will reconvene—there are four votes on the floor, and we will reconvene immediately at the conclusion of those four votes. I thank you for your patience as we go over to vote upon the conclusion of Mr. Morris' statement. Mr. Morris, you are recognized. Thank you and welcome.

STATEMENT OF DOUG MORRIS, CHAIRMAN AND CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP, NEW YORK, NY

Mr. MORRIS. Thank you, Chairman Rush. Thank you, Congressman Stearns. Thank you, Congressmen and women who are present here today. My name is Doug Morris, and I am chairman and CEO of the Universal Music Group. Thank you for this opportunity to be part of a national dialog on the impact of music in our lives and on our society. I certainly am not a stranger to the subject matter of this hearing. Lyrics and contents of songs are something that I have discussed with artists and media executives a great many times over too many years. I remember talking about it with my own parents and then with my kids as part of the inevitable tug between parents and teenagers.

There are problems in our communities, and it would be disingenuous to act as if music and the media have no influence on our culture.

The question that my colleagues and I regularly wrestle with is what we should do when an artist chooses to push the envelope. How can we balance the artist's right to express himself or herself with our responsibility to parents, employees, and society at large? These are really important issues, and we thank the chairman for providing such a prominent forum to further this conversation.

First some context. My company's music catalogue covers everything from Motown and Mozart to U2, Pavarotti, Reba McEntire, and Common. We distribute titles that range from High School Musical to Cornel West's recent CD about contemporary society.

Rap is but a small part of Universal's total release schedule each year. Universal's mission, my mission, is to offer music fans around the world a selection of voices and sounds from as diverse and dynamic a group of artists as possible, knowing full well that not everyone will like or appreciate every artist or every work by every artist. The reason I like working with artists is because they look at the world a little differently than you and I. Their unique perspective pushes us to consider things we might not otherwise even consider.

From its inception rap has always been one of the most reflective genres in our culture. Perhaps it is the artist's willingness to hold up for review and scrutiny the more disturbing elements of the human condition. There has been a great deal of discussion about three particularly incendiary words sometimes used in rap, the B, H, and N words. I should point out that the overwhelming majority of the music in the Universal catalogue does not contain those words. Some rappers do use highly charged words, and that of course has led to this debate. From rappers themselves—like Chamillionaire in his new song which is quite funny, it is called

the Hip Hop Police—discussions on Oprah and BET, to op-eds, the words used by some are prompting a very important dialog that will tell us some things about ourselves, our society now, and the future of our society.

While I am the chairman of my company, the artists' words are certainly not my words. I have not lived their lives. I did not grow up in their homes or neighborhoods, and I certainly do not wish to control their emotions or their opinions. Much of the music is made by young people, many struggling to find their way. Like many young people their age they are rebellious, angry, filled with testosterone. Unfortunately, many of us grew up to be our parents. Maybe not unfortunately, but that is a fact. Their words reflect this. Often times the words are the most incisive commentaries on the problems plaguing our communities.

I don't take credit for the observations and expressions made in the songs that we love, nor for songs that contain lyrics that you and I may find offensive, but I do have a compact with every artist that we sign that I will support their art and I will support their right to express themselves. Importantly, this commitment extends to the public as well. Whether it is parents, fans or critics, if artists choose to use explicitly highly charged words, we will sticker the song with a parental advisory label. We are committed to insuring that music buyers get a heads up when a song contains words or themes that might not be suitable for all audiences.

The people at our record labels who reviewed the lyrics come from different walks of life. Their decisions are not made in a vacuum. Context is important. The cultural climate has an impact. There are regular conversations with retail outlets, radio programmers, and TV executives. And if the labels decide to sticker a song, edited versions are typically made available for retail as well as radio and television. If a work contains a parental advisory sticker our record companies follow the RIAA guidelines that limit when and how we market our music. In other words, we do not market explicit lyrics anywhere near young people.

We believe we mostly get it right through the sticker process and by making available edited editions, sanitized versions that address the feedback that we get from consumers and our distribution partners. I opened my remarks today by talking about the national discussion taking place about the impact of music in our culture and our responsibilities to the company. I think it is really a healthy one for all concerned. As we debate this issue, I am mindful of an important principle.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Morris, you have exceeded your time. Please conclude your comments. We do have to go vote so we have got just a couple more—as a matter of fact, the time is up for us to go vote. We got to run over there before they bang the gavel, so would you please bring your comments to a close, please? Please bring your comments to a close.

Mr. MORRIS. Certainly. I will just finish. I have one last paragraph. We pay a price for the first amendment. The price includes allowing highly charged words and images in our music even if they sometimes offend and cause pain. But consider the alternative. We pay a price but it is insignificant compared to the ability to speak our minds. I thank you today for inviting us.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Morris follows:]

Doug Morris, Chairman & CEO, Universal Music Group
Testimony before the House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection

Tuesday, September 25, 2007

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Doug Morris and I am Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Universal Music Group. Our company develops, manufactures, markets, sells and distributes recorded music through a network of subsidiaries, joint ventures and licensees in 77 countries around the world. We also own and administer music publishing interests.

Thank you for having me here today. And thank you for this opportunity to be part of the national dialogue on the impact of music in our lives, and on our society.

First some context. Universal's recorded music catalog covers everything from Motown and Mozart to The Who, Luciano Pavarotti and Muddy Waters. Our current artist roster includes contemporary sounds like those from Chicago rappers Common and Kanye West, established artists like U2, pop artists like Mariah Carey and rock bands like Fall Out Boy and Blue October. We have R&B artists like Keyshia Cole, Latin rockers like Juanes, classical music stars like Lang Lang, and the country sounds of George Strait and Reba McEntire. We also distribute titles that range from High School Musical and Hannah Montana to Cornel West's recent CD containing a collection of works about contemporary society.

Rap and hip-hop are just a small part of our total number of releases each year. Through August they were only six percent of our physical album sales and eight percent of the digital tracks and albums sold through legitimate online sites such as iTunes. Based on record sales, the height of hip-hop and rap's popularity was in 2000. According to the August 17, 2007 Time Magazine, in an article entitled *Hip-Hop's Down Beat*, rap sales have dropped 44% since 2000 and declined from 13% of all music sales to 10%.

Universal's mission is to offer music fans around the world a selection of voices and sounds from as diverse and dynamic a group of artists as possible. We strive to offer something for everyone - knowing full well that not everyone will like or appreciate every artist, or every work by every artist.

I have been blessed - incredibly so - to have spent my entire professional career in the music business. I began as a singer and songwriter. I wrote the Chiffons' hit "Sweet Talkin' Guy." I also produced a few records - including Brownsville Station's "Smokin' in the Boys Room." Back then, in the 60s, I never would have imagined that I would work with some of the most influential names in music - including Chuck Berry, The Rolling Stones, Stevie Wonder, Pete Townsend, Roberta Flack, Bette Midler, Mariah Carey, U2, Jay-Z and others.

I am not a stranger to the subject matter of this hearing. Lyrics and the content of popular songs are something that I have thought about and discussed with artists, managers, music fans and industry executives a great many times, over a great many years. It is a serious issue. There are problems in our communities and it would be disingenuous to act as if music and the media have no influence on our culture. The question that my colleagues and I regularly wrestle with is what we should do when an artist chooses to push the edges of the envelope. How can we balance the artist's right to express him or herself with our responsibilities to parents, employees and society at large? These are important issues and we thank the Chairman for providing such a prominent forum to further this conversation.

The reason I so love working with artists is because they look at the world a little differently than you and I. I enjoy being around them because they are innovators who push us to experience things we would not otherwise express, consider, reflect upon or imagine. One point that I cannot emphasize enough is that their words are their words - not mine or anyone else's.

The truth is that there is a healthy debate going on in the nation among singers, songwriters, musicians and music executives regarding the lyrics and words that are often found in some rap and hip-hop materials. From rappers themselves – as heard in Chamillionaire's news songs on his latest album - *Hip-Hop Police* and *The Evening News* - which give his perspective on this very subject, to the Oprah Winfrey show, to op-eds in newspapers, the words used by rappers are prompting debates that are telling us things about ourselves and our society. The founders of our country knew that we are healthier as a nation if we don't silence words that offend or provoke, but instead use them to encourage the very dialogues and discussions we are having today. I share that view.

The conversation is not solely about music - it is also relevant for broadcasters, movie studios, video game developers, comedians and many other types of entertainers. Many community leaders, including you Mr. Chairman, have encouraged this dialogue while at the same time recognizing that there is no simple answer.

From its inception, hip-hop has always been one of the most reflective genres in our culture. Perhaps it is an artist's very willingness to color outside of the lines, and to hold up for review and scrutiny the more disturbing elements of the human condition. Their words often reflect what they see and experience first hand in their communities. Rap and hip-hop may be the vehicle by which they escape lives of hopelessness, injustice, and poverty. Their words reflect their lives, which, regrettably, is often an unpleasant picture.

Public Enemy's Chuck D, one of the first rappers to expand beyond his neighborhood to a national audience, observed: "Rap is our CNN."

There has been a great deal of discussion about three particularly incendiary and offensive words. They are euphemistically called the "B, H and N words."

First and foremost, I have to note that the overwhelming majority of the music in the Universal catalog does not contain those words. And I should point out that even if UMG or any of the major record companies decides not to release music because of lyrical content, artists don't need the major record companies to release their music to reach the public. They can work through independent labels and distributors to handle all aspects of promoting and selling their recordings. Indeed, in today's digital world, they can do it themselves with mass distribution to millions of people with the click of a mouse.

Ironically, rap provides one of the best examples of unsigned artists finding a distribution outlet. Rap didn't start at record companies - rap started on street corners. Artists made their own tapes and sold them out of the trunks of their cars long before some label exec convinced his boss to give this new sound a chance. And many hit rap records still start that way today. Ultimately, it's the marketplace that decides whether a recording gains any traction with the public. People buy and listen to what they like - and we have landfills full of CDs they don't like.

Regardless of who the artist is, regardless of his or her message, the artist's words are not my words. I have not lived their lives, I did not grow up in their homes or neighborhoods, and I certainly do not control their emotions or opinions. Much of the music is made by young people - some struggling to find their way. Like many people their age, they are sometimes rebellious and angry - and their words reflect this. Sometimes the words offend. Sometimes they provoke. Often they boast and exaggerate. Other times their words are the most incisive commentaries on the problems plaguing our communities.

As the Chairman of this company, I don't take credit for the observations and expressions made in the songs that we love, nor for songs that contain lyrics that you and I may find offensive. But I do have a compact with every artist that we sign - I will support their art, and the truth that is their music, and their fundamental right to express themselves.

Importantly, that commitment is not absolute. We also have a commitment to the public - whether they are parents, fans or critics. If an artist chooses to use explicit, highly charged words in one of his songs, it will in all likelihood lead to the song being "stickered" with the Parental Advisory Label. We are committed to ensuring that music buyers get a "heads up" when a song or CD contains words or themes that might not be suitable for all audiences. This way, we provide parents the information necessary to make the right choices for their children.

By way of background, UMG operates a variety of different record labels in order to promote different sounds and different approaches to identifying new artists. We don't want one "set of ears" to make every creative decision - whether it is about talent or marketing or anything else. These labels have the direct interaction with their artists and the best insights into who they are and what they are trying to say in their music. Each label within the Universal family actively reviews its releases to see whether they contain words or lyrics that in context require a "heads up" for parents and other consumers.

Many individuals from our labels review an artist's lyrics. These include people from sales, promotion, marketing, A&R, men and women, some are parents; all are conscientious adults from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. They live in the community, live in society, and have been impacted by the Imus episode and discussions like this one in the same way that other Americans have been.

Based on their life experiences, as well as their appreciation for our commitment to the labeling program, our labels may decide to apply the Parental Advisory, and also decide to release it in both the original and edited versions. In almost all such situations we also make alternative "clean" versions of the albums that are available for radio and television. As I prepared for this hearing I was delighted to hear one reviewer say, "getting it right is as important an issue for us as making sure we have all the legal clearances needed to put the record in the stores."

If our labels decide to apply the Parental Advisory, the lyrics are sent up to a corporate lyrics review committee where a different set of reviewers makes another assessment. This committee is comprised of a diverse group outside of the label - from lawyers to mail room employees. The corporate review may lead to another dialogue with the artist - and at times the artist may decide to make certain additional modifications. Our retail and broadcast partners provide us with valuable opinions on how we're doing and we will occasionally suggest that an artist make subsequent alterations to the work based on feedback we receive from them. If an artist will not make those changes, their work won't be released to that partner.

If a decision is made to apply the parental advisory sticker, the labels follow the RIAA's marketing guidelines and our marketing efforts concentrate on ensuring that we don't market or promote the music to young audiences. [Information on the guidelines can be found at http://riaa.com/parentaladvisory.php#paladvisorylogostandards.]

I should add that while context is an important element of consideration, consumer expectations of the artist and the current cultural climate are also critical for deciding what should be edited from a stickered work. The decisions that are made regarding the application of a Parental Advisory, edited releases, video content and marketing materials are made thoughtfully and collaboratively. It's a system of checks and balances, responsibility, and respect for parents and artists that everyone in the Universal music family takes very seriously.

This hearing, and the hearings that have taken place in the past, remind the music industry of the importance of the stickering and marketing guidelines. So do the conversations convened by BET and others in the community. For all content creators and distributors, these conversations instill a heightened fidelity to the letter and the spirit of the commitments that we make to fully inform consumers.

Let me conclude with a personal observation. On my last trip to Washington, I drove past the construction site for a new museum - the Newseum. It is just down the street, virtually in the shadow of the Capitol. In my view, the architect has done every American an incredible service - because inscribed on the side of the building, in big and bold letters, are the words of our First Amendment. That façade will stand for years and years as a constant reminder to policymaker and tourist alike of the fundamental freedoms that we enjoy as Americans.

Those words are the essence of what we are discussing today. Americans are free to say what they feel, and think, and believe - be they an artist, a fan, a critic, the parent to whom we have made a commitment, or a policymaker who wants us to think carefully about the work that we do and our impact on society.

Thank you for allowing me to express my views.

Mr. RUSH. Thank you. The subommittee stands in recess until the conclusion of the last vote. We have got four votes. We will begin again immediately after the conclusion of the fourth vote.

[Recess.]

Mr. RUSH. This subcommittee is called to order again. Let me first of all remind the witnesses that your full written statement will be entered into the record. If you can summarize your statements in a matter of 5 minutes, then that would be good. We have not had a problem so far. I think that we have been very good as it relates to not going over the 5 minutes, and I really respect and acknowledge that.

I want to call now to testify before the subcommittee Mr. Alfred C. Liggins III. He is the president and CEO of Radio One. Radio One is a minority-owned radio station and it is the seventh-largest radio broadcaster and largely targets African-Americans with urban-based programming. Welcome, Mr. Liggins, and please take 5 minutes for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF ALFRED C. LIGGINS III, PRESIDENT AND CEO, RADIO ONE, INC., LANHAM, MD

Mr. LIGGINS. Thank you, Chairman Rush and Ranking Member Stearns and members of the subcommittee for allowing me to testify here today. For those of you who I have not met, let me formally introduce myself. I am Alfred Liggins III, chief executive officer of Radio One Incorporated. Radio One Incorporated is currently the largest media company in the United States that primarily targets African-Americans. Our media platform includes radio, print, satellite, Internet and our nationally distributed cable channel, TV One. Our Radio One network currently consists of 60 radio stations and can be found in 19 mostly large cities around the Nation. Three of our stations serve the Detroit market with music and talk formats including the first nationally syndicated black talk network. Five of our stations in Dallas and Houston provide music formats including our innovative contemporary inspirational format, which can now be heard on 12 FM radio stations across the country including Charlotte and Augusta.

However, those numbers do not really paint the full picture of who Radio One is. Radio One takes its responsibility to serve its communities very seriously. For this reason, the content broadcast on Radio One stations is a product and reflection of the audiences we serve. We at Radio One pride ourselves on our close-knit relationships with our listening audience, and we and view them as members of our extended family. This causes us to be responsive to and engaged in the many public affairs issues facing the local communities where we broadcast.

Just within the last week, two of our popular radio DJs who host shows with a hip hop format, one of whom can be heard in Dallas and Augusta and one of whom can he heard in Detroit, played an instrumental role in bringing national attention to the issues faced by the six black teenagers known as the Jena 6. We are proud to say that the efforts of many of our local radio stations to raise awareness of the Jena 6 case and organize bus caravans helped lead thousands of citizens, I think 50,000 citizens, to journey to Louisiana and played a pivotal role in making the rally for justice

in Jena such a resounding success. Also last week in response to the senseless violence that is currently plaguing Philadelphia and causing the city to lead the Nation in homicides, our local station there, Praise 103.9, organized a sold-out gospel concert featuring Yolanda Adams and Les Brown at Sharon Baptist Church, focusing on the theme, black life has value. We broadcast the concert live and also had personalities from our hip hop station in attendance to show their support for this important message.

I mention these events because they represent Radio One's commitment to our audience and are important to truly understanding who we are as a company. I applaud the subcommittee and Chairman Rush in particular for tackling this important topic. Throughout the course of our Nation's history, there have been many debates and differing opinions regarding musical content, freedom of speech and what constitutes art. Some have claimed the Bible is too violent, that Mark Twain is too racist, and I am willing to bet 100 years from now we will still be debating these important issues.

When it comes to hip hop music, some may choose to focus on particular artists or music that they found objectionable and I believe that that sort of debate is healthy and ultimately good for our society. However, it should be noted that hip hop music is not representative of the bulk of the content that we at Radio One provide. Only a small minority, 14 out of 60 total radio stations, have an urban contemporary format and they play hip hop music which often reflects the realities that many of these audiences face and observe in their daily lives.

Radio One is also not in charge of creating content or in the business of censorship or determining what is in good or bad taste. However, while other media platforms do not have public interest obligations, as the members of this subcommittee know and are well aware, we are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission. Radio One has always taken great care to comply with FCC guidelines and standards in regards to content. In fact, it should be pointed out that of all the music platforms available to listeners today, only broadcast radio is required to take steps to protect our listeners.

It is Radio One's policy that no song can be broadcast over the radio until it is listened to and the content is reviewed. Also, every Radio One station has a program director who is directly responsible for the music that is broadcast on that station. Each of our radio stations receive radio edit versions of songs which if necessary are further edited consistent with FCC regulations and local community standards. Our program directors participate in a conference call every other week moderated by our senior vice president of programming to discuss the content of music playing on our radio stations.

Part of the success of Radio One is based on the fact that we as a company respond to the variety and diversity of musical tastes of our audiences. If Radio One did not play hip hop music, we would not be serving our audience. Radio in many ways is a reflection of its community and what its listeners want to hear. We pride ourselves on being local broadcasters with the emphasis on "local." It is broadcasters that offer the localism that communities need

and deserve. While hip hop music is many different things to many different people, it is important to remember this revolutionary art form has created a multitude of opportunities and economic benefits for those who may not otherwise have had such an opportunity. For example, Snoop Dogg's success has allowed him to create a football league intended to attract inner city youth to football and not gangs, and David Banner has successfully used his star power to raise funds and increase visibility for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, which we participated in. We at Radio One are proud of our track record and are committed to serving the needs of our diverse audience and being responsible broadcasters.

Again, I thank you for allowing me to testify before the subcommittee today and I look forward to answering any questions that you might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Liggins follows:]

TESTIMONY OF ALFRED C. LIGGINS III

Thank you Chairman Rush, Ranking Member Stearns, and members of the subcommittee for allowing me to testify here today.

For those of you I have not met, let me formally introduce myself. I am Alfred Liggins, chief executive officer of Radio One, Inc. Radio One is currently the largest media company in the United States that primarily serves African-Americans. Our media platform includes radio, print, satellite, Internet and our nationally distributed cable channel, TV One.

Our Radio One network currently consists of 60 radio stations and can be found in 19 cities around the nation. Taken together we reach over 12 million listeners across the country. Three of our stations serve the Detroit market with music and talk formats, including the first nationally syndicated Black Talk Network. Five of our stations in Dallas and Houston provide music formats, including our innovative Contemporary Inspirational format which can now be heard on 12 FM stations across the country. The Contemporary Inspirational format can also be heard in Charlotte, where we have two stations, and Augusta, where we have five stations.

However, those numbers do not really paint the full picture of who Radio One is. Radio One takes its responsibility to serve its communities very seriously. For this reason, the content broadcast on Radio One stations is a product and reflection of the audiences we serve. We at Radio One pride ourselves on our close knit relationships with our listening audience and view them as members of our extended family. This causes us to be responsive to and engaged in the many public affairs issues facing the local communities where we broadcast.

How we serve our audiences can be summarized with two recent examples. Just within the last week two of our popular radio DJs who host shows with a hip hop format, one of whom can be heard in Dallas and Augusta and one of whom can be heard in Detroit, played an instrumental role in bringing national attention to the issues faced by six black teenagers known as the Jena 6. We are proud to say that the efforts of many of our local radio stations to raise awareness of the Jena 6 case and organize bus caravans helped lead thousands of citizens to journey to Louisiana, including the two DJs referred to above, and played a pivotal role in making the rally for justice in Jena such a resounding success.

Also, last week, in response to the senseless violence that is currently plaguing Philadelphia, and causing the city to lead the Nation in homicides, our local station Praise 103.9 organized a sold out gospel concert featuring Yolanda Adams and Les Brown at Sharon Baptist Church focusing on the theme of Black Life Has Value. We broadcast the concert live on 103.9 and also had personalities from our hip hop station in attendance to show their support for this important message.

I mention these events because they represent Radio One's commitment to our audience and are important to truly understanding who we are as a company. It is important to note that music is only one element of how we serve and entertain our listeners.

I applaud the Subcommittee, and Chairman Rush in particular, for tackling this important topic. Throughout the course of our Nation's history there have been many debates and differing opinions regarding musical content, freedom of speech and what constitutes art. Some have claimed the Bible is too violent, that Mark

Twain is too racist—and I am willing to bet 100 years from now we will still be debating these important issues.

When it comes to hip hop, some may choose to focus on particular artists or music that they find objectionable and I believe that sort of debate is healthy and ultimately good for our society. However, it should be noted that hip hop music is not representative of the bulk of the content that we at Radio One provide. For instance, the vast majority of our stations do not play hip hop at all. Only a small minority, 14 out of 60 total stations, have an urban contemporary format and they play hip hop music which often reflects the realities that many in the audiences face and observe in their daily lives

Radio One is also not in charge of creating content, or in the business of censorship or determining what is in good or bad taste. However, while other media platforms do not have public interest obligations, as the members of this Subcommittee are well aware, we are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, or the FCC. Radio One has always taken great care to comply with FCC guidelines and standards in regards to content. In fact, it should be pointed out, that of all the music platforms available to listeners today only broadcast radio is required to take steps to protect our listeners.

Furthermore, it is Radio One's policy that no song can be broadcast over the radio until it is listened to and the content reviewed. Every Radio One station has a program director who is directly responsible for the music that is broadcast on that station. Each of our radio stations receive radio edit versions of songs, which, if necessary, are further edited consistent with FCC regulations and local community standards. Our program directors participate in a conference call every other week moderated by our senior vice president of programming to discuss the content of music playing on our stations.

That being said, part of the success of Radio One is based on the fact that we as a company respond to the variety and diversity of musical tastes of our audiences. If Radio One did not play hip hop music we would not be serving our audience. Radio in many ways is a reflection of its community and what its listeners want to hear. We pride ourselves on being local broadcasters, with the emphasis on "local." It is broadcasters that offer the localism that communities need and deserve. Furthermore, while hip hop music is many different things to many different people, it is important to remember this revolutionary art form has created a multitude of opportunities and economic benefits for those who may not otherwise have had such an opportunity. Snoop Dogg's success has allowed him to create a football league intended to attract inner city youth to football, not gangs. And David Banner has successfully used his star power to raise funds and increase visibility for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

We at Radio One are proud of our track record and are committed to serving the needs of our diverse audience and being responsible broadcasters. Again, thank you for allowing me to testify before this subcommittee today and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Mr. RUSH. Thank you very much.

Our next and final opening statement will come from Mr. Strauss Zelnick, who is the chairman of the board of Take-Two Interactive Software Incorporated. Take-Two owns Rockstar Games, which makes the popular and controversial Grand Theft Auto video game series, and I might add, other kinds of products also.

Mr. Zelnick, welcome and please take 5 minutes for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF STRAUSS ZELNICK, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, TAKE TWO INTERACTIVE SOFTWARE, NEW YORK, NY

Mr. ZELNICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Stearns. I have submitted my testimony to the record so if I may, I am going to speak somewhat less formally to the committee.

Chairman Rush, in the beginning you talked about forming a coalition of concern, compassion and commitment, and I think from everyone's comments today, I think it suggested we see the world

very much as you do. In fact, there is not a lot of diversity of comments here. I am the chairman, as you said, of Take-Two Interactive, one of the world's largest independent publishers of interactive entertainment. Before that, I was the chief executive of a big record company, BMG. Before that I was the president of a big movie studio, 20th Century Fox, and I started my career in television at Columbia Pictures. As Representive Stearns said, our job is to make hits. That is what I have had to do my whole career, and we make hits by paying attention to what our consumers want and delivering them a product that most people like. So in my career, my companies have not only put out products like Grand Theft Auto but my companies have released movies like "Home Alone" and been responsible for artists like Whitney Houston.

This is a committee that is partially focused on commerce. This is a big business. While the music business has faced some declines of late and the movie business has basically been flat, interactive entertainment has been growing rapidly. Today it is an $18.5 billion industry. It is bigger than the box office in America and around the world and we employ about 250,000 people. My own company, which some people probably have never even heard of, does over $1 billion a year in sales and we employ over 2,000 people around the world.

I take this topic really seriously. Like many others here, I have children; I have three kids. My oldest took the subway to school this morning in Brooklyn. I am really concerned about my kids' safety, their opportunities, violence that they see around them and that might affect them, and a culture of civility which seems pretty stressed right now. So I agree that this shouldn't be a discussion about finger pointing. In fact, the evidence and common sense suggests that entertainment doesn't create values and certainly doesn't create behavior. As the interactive entertainment business has grown in the last 17 years, in fact per capita violence in America, as stunning as it still is, is actually down 50 percent in those 17 years.

What is also pretty remarkable is all the entertainment we produce is worldwide. It is a worldwide phenomenon but many of the issues that we are discussing today are uniquely American problems. So why are we so special? Well, the first is, sadly, there is ready access to guns in America. Thirty-five percent of American households have firearms. Despite our enormous wealth in this country, there is inadequate educational opportunity. There is domestic abuse, there are drugs, there is gang activity and the list goes on. I am also pleased that today's discussion isn't about the first amendment. Everyone here agrees that the first amendment must be protected. It seems to me that everyone here is proud that we live in a country that guarantees freedom of speech, even speech we don't like.

So I think the discussion should be about what are we doing as an industry to address social concerns and what are we doing when we bring our entertainment products out. Well, what are we doing in the interactive entertainment business? The first thing is, the average age of our players is 33 and it is rising. The average age of our purchasers is 39. Ninety-two percent of the industry's releases are for family and teens. Only 8 percent are for adults. The

FTC, directed by this committee, reviewed our industry's rating system and said it is the most rigorous in the business. Eighty-seven percent of parents are satisfied with our system and all of our hardware has parental controls which are easy to use and encourage parents to make choices for their kids, and retailers comply with our system at least as effectively as cinema owners comply with motion picture ratings.

So it seems to me the discussion should be about our responsibility, and I take that very seriously. We have three jobs to do at my companies. We have to make great entertainment because frankly, if we are not making hit entertainment that everyone wants to consume, we are not relevant and I wouldn't be sitting here today. We also make art. The reason I am in this business is not just entertainment and certainly not just to make money. I believe what we do is art and that is our standard at all of our companies. If we don't believe it is art, we will not put it out. But art is in the eyes of the beholder and some art that some people consider beautiful, other people don't even consider pretty or even tasteful or acceptable. And finally, we are in the business of business and that is just a truth. We are in commerce and that is why we are all sitting here and that is also why we are relevant.

I think there is an enormous line between entertainment and exploitation. We try to stand on the line of entertainment. Sometimes we make mistakes. It is our job to be vigilant about those and to correct them. And then when we make a product, we need to let parents and consumers know what it is before they get it home so they are not surprised and they don't consume something that they don't want to consume. Having done that, having tried to meet those standards, having reviewed our products, having played our games, when we put them in the box, I stand behind them fully and I take complete responsibility for what we put out.

I welcome our dialog today. Thank you for having me.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Zelnick follows:]

STATEMENT OF STRAUSS ZELNICK

Chairman Rush, Ranking Member Stearns, and members of this subcommittee: I welcome the opportunity to testify today. I do so as the father of three children, as a concerned citizen, and as the recently-named chairman of an industry-leading company that produces a broad spectrum of interactive entertainment.

Today, I hope to provide some perspective on a vital question: does entertainment influence violent behavior in our society—or does it instead reflect a social environment that has become unacceptably violent? This question is complex—and the answers are elusive.

We in the entertainment industry must also ask ourselves: how should we balance our right to free expression with our responsibility to avoid exposing children to inappropriate words and images?

Before considering those questions, let me address two common misperceptions about our industry.

First, interactive entertainment is not predominantly consumed by young people. In fact, the average age of our players is 33.

Second, there is no evidence—none—of a direct link between interactive entertainment and violent behavior.

We certainly can agree that the level of violence in America today is unacceptably high. In 1990, the U.S. homicide rate was approximately 10 in 100,000. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the rate dropped to 5.6 per 100,000 in 2006—an improvement, to be sure, but far from ideal.

This period of declining violence coincides with the emergence and dramatic growth of a new form of art and entertainment: the video game—clearly dem-

onstrating a lack of correlation between the consumption of our products and the trend in violent behavior.

Then what is at the root of the unacceptably high level of violent behavior in America today? Before we address this question, we must, at a minumum, acknowledge that entertainment produced in the U.S. is equally popular and available worldwide—yet the per capita rate of violent crime in our country is vastly greater than in any other developed nation.

What distinguishes us from our neighbors?

Nearly 35 percent of U.S. households have firearms, and our regulations regarding the licensing, registration and authorization of guns are among the most permissive in the world.

Other social forces must also be considered. A 1999 article entitled "The Epidemic of Violence in America," in the journal postgraduate medicine, cited several risk factors, such as: domestic abuse, weakening community values, an inadequate educational system, and gang activity.

Entertainment was not exempted from this list. While the article did not mention music or interactive software, its author noted: "The average american child sees more than 200,000 violent acts on television before age 15."

It is perhaps understandable that many citizens, frustrated by intractable problems such as the widespread availability of guns, domestic abuse, failing schools, fractured communities and gang activity, would be tempted to fixate on a target that seems somewhat more manageable: entertainment.

However, restricting ideas on the printed page, on the movie screen, on the evening news, in audio recordings, or in interactive entertainment will not eradicate violence in our society—any more than covering up a mirror will eliminate the reality it reflects.

The fact is, all forms of entertainment may contain words or images that could be considered violent, and to some extent they always have. That is because artists have—and indeed must have—the freedom to explore all aspects of society—the good, the bad and the controversial.

Some further believe that exposure to depictions of violence can play an important role in the development of an individual's moral and social outlook. As Judge Richard Posner of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit wrote in 2001, "Violence has always been and remains a central interest of humankind and a recurrent theme of culture as anyone familiar with classic fairy tales is aware."

I think the issues involving entertainment and violence might be clearer if we review the story line of one of our products—grand theft auto: san andreas. It is often the case—sadly—that an artwork's most vocal critics are those who have not seen it. Playing san andreas, one finds that this cinematic interactive work is more complex than most novels or movies—and that there are serious consequences for violent acts.

Just as the Sopranos on television, or Goodfellas in film, depict violent behavior as part of a dramatic narrative involving crime and redemption, so does Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas.

And, unlike tv, movies, or books, grand theft auto includes instant feedback that demonstrates the dire results of anti-social acts: the player immediately increases his "wanted level," which can make the game not just hard, but actually impossible to play. At the highest level, the national guard is mobilized against the player and there is no escape from the long arm of the law. There are also explicit rejections of drug use and racism—and a strong moral center in the African American hero.

That said, the entertainment industry must operate in a responsible manner. We are in the business of making art and entertainment, and engaging consumers. To achieve these goals, we aim to attract uniquely talented individuals and encourage them to express freely their passion and creativity.

We must weigh our creative impulses and commercial goals with the ballast of social responsibility. While we do not create—and cannot prevent—violence, our companies must work to ensure that society's youngest, most vulnerable and most impressionable members are not exposed to inappropriate subject matter in our products.

I am proud of the measures that my company and our industry have taken to ensure that our products are enjoyed responsibly by appropriate audiences.

• First, our industry produces a broad range of products, so that consumers of all ages have access to compelling, engaging and age-appropriate entertainment. I know that adult-themed entertainment draws a disproportionate level of media attention. However, titles rated "M for Mature" made up only 15 percent of total sales last year, as compared to 85 percent for those with youth-oriented ratings.

• My own company publishes a wide range of products, including "E" rated titles such as carnival games, rockstar games presents table tennis, dora the explorer and sports titles—just as major movie studios offer family fare as well as "R" rated films.

• Second, the interactive entertainment industry operates within a voluntary rating system that is rigorous and independent. An April 2007 report by the Federal trade commission found that a high proportion of parents use—and are very satisfied with—that system. The report also found that retailers enforced the ratings as effectively as the movie industry. Our product packages also include content descriptors to inform consumers—and especially parents—as to the specific subject matter of the products.

• Third, we market our products in a thoughtful and responsible manner. We design our advertising, marketing plans and media buys to reach audiences of the appropriate age group, in accordance with the ESRB's rules.

• Fourth, today's interactive entertainment hardware offers robust control options that enable parents to limit a child's access to mature content. The controls also work for R-rated movies, which means that these consoles provide parents with tools that are not typically available on commercial DVD, cd or mp3 players.

• Fifth, the ESRB produces educational advertisements regarding the ratings system, and has entered into partnerships with state attorneys general and the national parent teacher association to educate and inform parents. Individual companies also are doing their part: Take-Two runs banner ads for the ESRB on our homepage.

In my view, entertainment companies make a decision with every release, and that decision must be well-considered, thoughtful and sound. At Take-Two, every product is reviewed by members of top management—myself included. We will not release a title that does not meet our standards: as art, as entertainment, and as a socially responsible product. Once we do release a product, I stand behind it fully and completely.

We aim to distinguish creative and compelling story telling that advances artistic expression from subject matter that gratuitously exploits or glorifies violence. And all of our products need to be rated and marketed appropriately.

We all must continue to be thoughtful and responsible citizens, parents and executives. My children walked to school in our Nation's largest city this morning. They are listening to me right now. So I share your fundamental concern about violence in america. I share your concern that we do everything we can to protect our youth. And along with those concerns, i also have confidence in my conviction: that the interactive entertainment industry will remain vigilant in its efforts to balance art and entertainment with sound judgment, and our cherished and unfettered freedom of expression with social awareness, sensitivity and responsibility. Thank you very much.

Mr. RUSH. I want to thank all of our witnesses. The Chair recognizes himself for 5 minutes of questioning.

I am going to begin my questioning and I am going to address it to each and every one of you. A prominent hip hop executive and artist, Mr. Russell Simmons, and others have suggested that the recording industry and artists ban or refrain from the use of hateful words or hateful speech, the "N" word, the "B" word, the "W" word, other words that are hateful as they depict racial and religious and sexual orientation. Do you believe that this is a viable, quote, unquote, business model? Can your industries and your corporations profit from such a ban or indeed such a pledge? I will start with Mr. Dauman.

Mr. DAUMAN. Mr. Chairman, in our standards and practice which we have had in place for some time, we do in fact ban those words, and when we have music videos submitted to us as we consider them for airing, if they contain those words we will not air them. We will air them if they get edited and we choose them for creative reasons but it is part of our standards and practices applicable across our networks to ban those words and others that are

derogatory terms from a racial point of view, gender, sexual orientation and many other reasons.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Bronfman.

Mr. BRONFMAN. Well, distinct from Mr. Dauman's role as the distributor of content, we at Warner Music are creators of content, and we don't think that banning expression is an appropriate approach. We do of course sticker any content that would include the words that you described, the "N" word, the "B" word, the "H" word. No content goes out of Warner Music with those words contained that doesn't explicitly warn parents that there is explicit content, and we make edited versions for distribution partners like Mr. Liggins and Mr. Dauman who standards and practices would not carry those words or explicit versions of the content that we create. But hateful language, sir, is in the eye of the beholder. It also is important that it is contextualized, and it is important that our artists have the opportunity to express the frustration that they have with the problems in their communities with which they live, and if you ask me were I fortunate enough to be in a position many years ago whether I would have distributed or stood behind the material of Lenny Bruce, I would have said yes. I think he is a legitimate artist who did use hateful words in a different context to express his opinion and that is why I said, I think this is a very contextual argument, but as I said, at the end of the day as much as we understand people's concerns and frustrations with the use of this language, it is very difficult as a producer of content to censor or limit artists and so what we choose to do is to sticker that product so that parents and other guardians can make informed decisions about the content that we create.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Morris?

Mr. MORRIS. I agree with Mr. Bronfman. I think they are horrible, evil words. I would never ban any word. If I can digress one little bit, Mr. Chairman, what I think bothers everyone on this committee is the feeling that standards within the companies have deteriorated, and that is what the benefit of this meeting for me really is, that we will take these discussions back to our company and we will ask them, do you feel the standards are very different, that they are lower than they were 10 years ago or 20 years ago, and if so, can we improve them. I don't think you can improve anything to ban three words from any kind of musical or theatrical production. It just makes "The B * * * * is Back" by Elton John—you are not going to ban that song so it is—but I do think we will take this back with us and deal with it in the proper manner.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Liggins, I have about 5 seconds. Can you just——

Mr. LIGGINS. I guess if somebody like Russell Simmons was able to convince artists not to use those words, there would still be a coalition or a faction of renegades that, through technology, are increasingly able to even bypass the record companies and get straight to the consumers through digital technology. So I think even if you have an effort by everybody up here and Radio and Viacom, you are still going to have a leak in terms of exposure to the consumer.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Zelnick?

Mr. ZELNICK. I suppose I have less than 5 seconds. Mr. Chairman, I don't think a ban is a good plan. As Mr. Bronfman said, it

depends on the context. If we are portraying good guys and bad guys, maybe the only way you can portray a bad guy is to put terrible language in that person's mouth. But I am very much opposed to glorifying those kinds of stereotypes and images. And interestingly, this is a conversation we have at our companies all the time. We had a conversation about one of those words you mentioned quite specifically, utterly without regard to this hearing, a couple of weeks ago. Degrading words and images shouldn't be glorified, they shouldn't be put in the mouths of characters that people are going to admire. But it is possible that a work of art can't possibly be seen as realistic if we eliminate every allusion to what is actually going on in the streets. So it is a complicated discussion but no, I wouldn't suggest we ban the words.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair recognizes the ranking member, Mr. Stearns, for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Morris, did I hear you just say that you would not ban any word? I thought you just said that. Mr. Morris?

Mr. MORRIS. I am trying to think if there is any word that I would ban.

Mr. STEARNS. What I understand you to say is you would not ban any word, which means in this case Universal Music Group under your leadership would not ban any word in any of the publications. Is what you implied? That is what your statement was.

Mr. MORRIS. Well, it depends on the context it would be used in, Congressman.

Mr. STEARNS. Well, I am going to hand out to you some lyrics. It took me 30 seconds to pull up some lyrics for 50 Cent, and you can read just the first two paragraphs of that. It has, as the chairman mentioned, it has the "F" word, the "S" word, the "N" word. We are also giving you lyrics we picked up in 15 seconds, Cameron lyrics, which talk about explicit sex, and my question to you, in your mind, is this free speech to use these words and to talk about explicit sex in the song the way it is? You are welcome to read a few of those lyrics.

Mr. MORRIS. Yes, in my mind, this is free speech and this is what he wanted to say. It is not my place in this life to tell him what to say.

Mr. STEARNS. And you feel that when a person uses those words which almost everybody in this room would be appalled——

Mr. TOWNS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STEARNS. No, I will not yield.

Mr. TOWNS. I wanted to get a copy of what you are talking about.

Mr. STEARNS. Oh, sure, I will be glad to give you a copy. I think everybody in the room would be appalled to hear those words in a public forum yet you are saying here today that you would support and not ban any of that word in any of your publications at Universal Music is what you are saying.

Mr. MORRIS. That is correct, Congressman. I believe he has the right to say whatever he wants. That is my point of view.

By the way, in my testimony as I said before, all of this is reviewed by different committees within the company.

Mr. STEARNS. Yes. Mr. Bronfman, you said in your opening statement that you don't believe in any absolutes. Is that correct? You

used those words, "I don't believe in any absolutes," and you go on to talk about this contextual argument and everything has to be framed and you talked about the Beatles and Elvis Presley, and I think Mr. Liggins talked about Mark Twain, but in your opinion, there is really no absolutes at all in your business that you can have the total freedom for an artist to say or do anything they want with no absolutes in terms of our culture?

Mr. BRONFMAN. Well, I think that it is difficult to draw an absolute. We do review work. We are in constant dialog with our artists, and as I said, this material that you are referring to here specifically, Congressman, does get stickered. It is not generally available.

Mr. STEARNS. But can't you go on satellite radio and hear this and it is not stickered, it is not deleted, and all these words on satellite radio you can hear? Isn't that true?

Mr. BRONFMAN. Satellite radio is regulated by someone other than——

Mr. STEARNS. I understand, but Warner Music publishes this. In fact, the Cameron lyrics is published by Warner Music in which it talks all about explicit sex, and so you said that this is OK, we will publish it, but if it comes to the radio, we will dub it out, but when it gets on satellite radio it is the full information, isn't it?

Mr. BRONFMAN. There may be explicit channels on satellite radio. You can listen to their comedy channels, you can listen to any number of things where language like this is found, Mr. Chairman, and I think what is important also to remember is that while the language that you might find offensive here and in fact many people including myself might find offensive in content that is produced by any number of entertainment companies, that is not true for everyone, and the relevance of this content in some communities is very different than——

Mr. STEARNS. Oh, I know. You can go across the spectrum and find people that have different tastes, and I understand that, but you as a publishing executive, you are saying that you are going to not censor anything if it has the "N" word in it or the "F" word or the "S" word or explicit sex. In your opinion today, that is OK and it is a freedom of expression.

Mr. BRONFMAN. That is not what I said nor is it what I have testified to, Congressman. What I said is to the question would I put a ban on all work containing those words, I said no, and I wouldn't.

Mr. STEARNS. Do you support the Cameron lyrics as free speech?

Mr. BRONFMAN. I do.

Mr. STEARNS. OK. So then you condone the words that are in here as free speech?

Mr. BRONFMAN. I recognize my responsibility——

Mr. STEARNS. Even though the cultural abhorrence of what——

Mr. BRONFMAN. Congressman, I recognize that my role as a citizen and my role as a corporate executive are two different things.

Mr. STEARNS. OK. Here is a question for you, Mr. Bronfman and Mr. Morris. Have you ever consulted with one of our artists about lyrics that they should or should not put in their work?

Mr. BRONFMAN. The answer to that is yes.

Mr. STEARNS. Yes? Mr. Morris?

Mr. MORRIS. Yes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Chairman, before my time is off, it is possible that I could go across the aisle to answer that same question whether they consult with their artists about the lyrics that should or should not be put in the work? Mr. Dauman?

Mr. DAUMAN. I do not. I trust programming decisions to the people who run our networks. As I mentioned in my prepared remarks, Debra Lee oversees BET networks and people below her, Judy McGrath as well as people who run their networks, and I believe they do their job very responsibly.

Mr. STEARNS. So you have no interface then with the artists?

Mr. DAUMAN. I personally do not.

Mr. STEARNS. And Mr. Liggins?

Mr. LIGGINS. I don't either. All of our programming is——

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Zelnick?

Mr. ZELNICK. Yes, the buck stops on my desk. I certainly do. I do it all the time. Sometimes I annoy people when I do it.

Mr. STEARNS. So you will actually call the artist up himself and——

Mr. RUSH. The gentleman's time is up.

Mr. Butterfield is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. This 5 minutes has a tendency of going so fast and so I am going to try to read my question in the interest of time. Let me start with Mr. Dauman. Thank you very much for coming forward today. You have a great company. I know a lot about your company and thank you so very much.

Mr. DAUMAN. Thank you.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Viacom subsidiaries, according to our research, reaches over 500 million households worldwide and Viacom owns the top music entertainment stations currently broadcasting in this country. Do you think that your company goes far enough with its standards and practices to ensure content is being properly reviewed for offensive content before it is broadcast to these households or could those standards and practices be more rigorous so as not to be derogatory to women or other individuals?

Mr. DAUMAN. We continually review our standards. We evolve with the culture. We both reflect the culture and try to inform the culture and we are very proud of that. Because we appeal to young people, you mentioned our 500 million-plus viewers around the world, we have a responsibility not only to the U.S. but around the world as we reach young people. We are very proud of many of the issues we have. I mean, for example, we talked about gaming, our MTV youth site. We put out a free game on the Internet called "Darfur is Dying" which was downloaded 3 million times. So we feel we have an important role and a very pro-social role in impacting youth today and we impact youth by entertaining them, and then once we entertain them, we reach out to them. You can always do better. Domestically in our networks, just to give you an idea, these are 24-hour-a-day networks. We run over 100,000 hours of programming a year on just our major domestic networks, hundreds of thousands of hours across the globe, across all out networks.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. But are you satisfied with——

Mr. DAUMAN. Some things slip by occasionally and we review what occurs but if you look at the totality of what we do, we are extremely proud.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. But you are satisfied with your standards as they are currently written?

Mr. DAUMAN. We believe we have appropriate standards. As I said, we review them all the time and we have diverse group of employees reflecting their constituencies and they think about issues that get brought up. We meet with our critics and we meet with consumers, and I am satisfied we have a good process.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Let me spend a couple of minutes with you, Mr. Bronfman. Thank you very much also for coming, and I want to equally salute your company for the work that you do as well. Sir, you speak about Warner Music's practices regarding content and you say that your aim is not to create or censor art but to ensure that your artists are aware of the impact of their creation. But what do you do, sir, in an instance where a young individual doesn't care about the impact of their music or the effect that it is going to have on a certain portion of our society when their only interest is making money and not in the social consequences of their music? Can you help me with this?

Mr. BRONFMAN. Well, sir, it is very difficult to answer a hypothetical question. As I mentioned in my testimony, we review content and we review that content with an eye towards the personal history of the artist, the artist's history as a recording artist and the context in which the piece of work is being created and we take that responsibility seriously. It is very difficult to answer, as I said, a hypothetical question and very difficult to determine sitting at a time that a record is produced what its impact on society will be.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Do you concede that there are artists that you deal with who don't care about societal consequences?

Mr. BRONFMAN. I think the majority of artists that we work with are good American citizens who are primarily concerned with their art. That is what they do. And I am not sure that is different in any work or any genre.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. All right. Mr. Morris, let me conclude with your, sir. While the parental advisory label on music sold in stores gives the consumer, be it a young person or a parent a heads-up on the music, what more can be done to make sure that impressionable young minds are truly educated about the potential impact that music can have on their lives?

Mr. MORRIS. Well, this is a discussion we have endlessly at our company, and——

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Please push the button, or pull it closer to you. Thank you.

Mr. MORRIS. Would you repeat your question, Mr. Congressman?

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Yes. Let me phrase it this way. The parental advisory label that is on your music that is sold in the stores gives the consumer a heads-up, if you will, about what type of music they are to expect, and my question is, what more can be done to make sure that this young person is educated about the consequences of the music?

Mr. MORRIS. We are in continual discussions about how to improve getting that word out to the parents. As I said, all of our ex-

plicit music is stickered with an RIAA certified sticker, and it shines out like a neon bulb. Then it is up to the parents to understand what it is in that. There is parental responsibility in all of this.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Yes, we all need to work together to better educate our families about the consequence of the music.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. RUSH. The gentlelady from Tennessee, Mrs. Blackburn, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for bearing with us while we run to the floor and vote and we thank you that you are hanging with us on this hearing because it is important, and the more I listen to you, the more I think that what we are talking about nibbling around the edges of the symptoms. We are not getting at the root causes, and Mr. Rush and I visited for a few moments while we were off at votes about, we may want to come back to you with some more questions once we have heard from the next panel, and I agree with my colleague from New York that what we may have wanted was to have that panel first and then come to you. And Mr. Chairman, if it is agreeable with you, I would like the opportunity for us to come back to them with written questions.

Mr. RUSH. Without objection, we will make sure that we have 30 days to submit written questions to the witnesses and we will ask them to properly respond to the written questions.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We appreciate that.

We keep coming back to the things that I mentioned in my opening statement, that choices have consequences and that your standards are based on your core values from which your companies operate, and what I would like to know from each of you is how you facilitate that. Mr. Bronfman is dealing with creators of the content. Mr. Dauman and Mr. Morris are deciding what they are going to censor and put together. Mr. Liggins makes choices about what he puts on the air, Mr. Zelnick, what he is going to drop into a game, and I assume that most of you are either parents or grandparents, and you don't make these choices in a vacuum, that you have kind of an internal little thermometer more or less as you look at different things and that is for you personally but I would like to hear from you how you vet this within your company. Do you have a committee, do you pull together your division heads? Is it just a hey, we think this is going to make money or is there this thoughtful process that goes into your choices, and I would like to hear from you on that simply because I do think that we are talking about symptoms and causes when we look at the content. But the other component of this is, you have that pressure of the Internet and many times I think some of you probably get blamed for releasing an uncut version of something that gets put onto YouTube or loaded into the Internet and then it is there for all the world to see. So I want to hear from you each on standards and kind of your best practices and also I would like to know, and you may need to submit to me in writing and if you want to punt this one and get back to me with a percentage, how much of your annual operating budget, annual operating budget are you spending on education and charitable work and doing some goodwill in the

community to help fight the root causes that may lead some of these content creators to write and create some of this content that they are bringing forward. So we have got a minute and 10 seconds left. Mr. Dauman, I will start with you.

Mr. DAUMAN. Let me start with your last point because we do an awful lot. I mentioned some of the initiatives that we have across out networks. Let me just talk about this week.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Very quickly.

Mr. DAUMAN. We put $2 million of airtime as well as $1 million in cash to raise money for the Martin Luther King Memorial. This Saturday on Nickelodeon, we are going off air on a "Let's Just Play" campaign where we are the only network who goes blank to encourage kids to go play. We have any number of initiatives across the globe——

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I am going to cut in and hand it to Mr. Bronfman.

Mr. BRONFMAN. Congresswoman, I will get back to you on the exact dollars that we spend but we have a number of initiatives across the company that the company spends money on and then further that our executives also invest in.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. And best practices or vettings?

Mr. BRONFMAN. Yes, and then the process that we follow at the company is our labels in accordance with the RIAA guidelines determine what is potentially going to be stickered.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Let us restate that. RIAA guidelines?

Mr. BRONFMAN. RIAA guidelines.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Thank you for clarity.

Mr. BRONFMAN. That material, those lyrics——

Ms. BLACKBURN. I am going to punt to Mr. Morris, please.

Mr. MORRIS. Our system is very similar to Mr. Bronfman's.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. OK. Thank you.

Mr. Liggins?

Mr. LIGGINS. We are regulated by the FCC so we are the only entity that actually——

Mrs. BLACKBURN. All right. Mr. Zelnick?

Mr. ZELNICK. We have a quarterly product review process where the creative team meets with the executive team to go through the products and——

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Quarterly?

Mr. ZELNICK. Quarterly, every quarter, every product that is in development. Our products take 2 or 3 years to develop. We have ongoing discussions about what we think we should or shouldn't do creatively. As I said, we are opposed to glorifying——

Mrs. BLACKBURN. So it is a part of your everyday ongoing process?

Mr. ZELNICK. Every day, and before a game is released I look at it, I play it——

Mrs. BLACKBURN. My time has expired. Mr. Chairman, thank you and I yield back.

Mr. RUSH. And the Chair requests that the witnesses, would you please put the full context of your responses to that question in writing to the committee, please? Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Gonzalez.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. My apologies to the chairman and to my colleagues for not being present during the testimony, and to the witnesses, obviously we have to be in five different places at one time and I apologize and I am hoping that in your testimony you may have covered some of this and I apologize again if in fact it is redundant.

But it seems there are some considerations here. First of all, you have individuals that have raised this to a question of free speech, first amendment, artistic expression and so on, and when we deal with that, we all kind of retreat and we get kind of concerned. I am not real sure that is true or not so the first question is, from your perspective, the individuals that provide the videos, the music and such, is it really an issue of first amendment, artistic expression, freedom of expression and so on? Is it really about censorship? There was an article last week on the 19th in the Post and it was about Reverend Coats being over with Black Entertainment Television and protesting and they said oh, nice try, reverend, but we call that Talibanning, that's censorship and such, and I just wondering from your perspective if that really is a factor in making your decision about what you put out there. The other thing is, are you factoring in that there is not as much control as to what young people get to view, listen and download? It is a whole new age. It is the age of squint TV. Your mobile devices, what we are doing with those. Do you factor that in, that there is a tremendous audience out there that has expanded exponentially? People don't have control over what young people—it is one thing what you have at home and you can supervise and such. The last thing, truly, it is just a matter of dollars? If it is going to make money, does anything else really matter? Those are the three questions, and if you can just real short answers, let us see if we can get through with it, and we will start with the first gentleman. Thank you.

Mr. DAUMAN. Congressman, again we do listen to different voices in the community. You mentioned Reverend Coats. We have met with many, many people and we listen to critics and that informs our programmers as to what they put out. I am not sure it is quite appropriate to harass one of our executives at her home but that is what we contend with. As far as the way we look at our content and our mission, yes, we are here to make money. There is the business part of show business. But we also use our power to entertain very responsibly in our view and we look for opportunities to reach young people, and I do find it ironic that we run a company and my colleagues run companies where there are standards and practices, where there is a review, and we live in a world, as you point out, where there is infinite ability on the part of young people, old people to access any content, objectionable or not. We try to put it in context but there is a larger problem here that is not just about the media, it is about societal problems and there is no way to control all content whether we find it objectionable or not, so the role that we play putting it in context is important.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Bronfman?

Mr. BRONFMAN. Congressman Gonzalez, I would say that the first amendment and more importantly, freedom of artistic expression, is very important and remains very important to us. But at the same time, and in my testimony I said that dose not absolve

us of our corporate responsibility. We cannot rest only on the fact that our artists have a right to express themselves. I would also say to you, sir, that in terms of distribution, it is dramatic how our works are now available legally and illegally on almost every possible distribution device and distribution network. On many of those networks, our work sits side by side with all kinds of pornography and other kinds of reprehensible content that has not been overseen, laws are not being observed, and frankly, we could use your help in trying to police the amount of pirated material that is circulating everywhere including on Sprint devices and any other mobile or online device. And lastly, I would admit to the same truth that Mr. Dauman did which is yes, we run a business, yes, we have owners. We are charged with making a profit, but nowhere in our core values does making a profit come ahead of being proud of what we do and what are proud of what we do as a company and we stand behind what we do even though there are going to be products from time to time that people, different people and different walks of life will find difficult to deal with.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Morris?

Mr. MORRIS. Congressman, I really feel that the music mirrors society. It reflects what is going on in the world. It is very interesting that 95 percent of music we put out has nothing to do with rap music, but I am of the position that music is really a narrator of what is going on in the world and that is what we have to deal with. I am particularly angry at the fact that the music business is the only business I have ever heard of that is being destroyed by criminal behavior and no one has even discussed that. Our business has deteriorated because of the work of criminals who steal most of it, and if you would go to Limewire, you would have something that would shock you beyond belief. Every song is taken off for free. All the people who work at our company, we used to have 12,000 people working at the company. We have now 6,000. Tower Records, hundreds of stores have closed because of this. In between our music, which is now stolen and everyone loses the money, is an amazing array of child pornography and it is incredible to me that Congress has not looked into this Limewire situation, which is truly——

Mr. GONZALEZ. And I am not saying that we haven't failed in certain respects but we are just looking today in particular to you and to some of the artists and such in a particular area, and I don't actually think we actually are failing there. But I will tell you, you are saying that music sometimes will reflect society and such but you have tremendous influence, and what you promulgate, you can legitimize that which is illegitimate. You can make that acceptable which is truly unacceptable. That is what marketing is all about, and we are kidding ourselves, especially in the society that we live today, that the power of the product and the service that you put out expands markets, makes things acceptable and such. My time is up and we may have some additional time where the other individual witnesses may respond.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the witnesses.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Fossella is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOSSELLA. I will waive, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Weiner, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WEINER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that we should also recognize that we in political life are part of the passion play around this issue. We benefit also from our ability to stand up and thump our chest about outrageous music that we hear and we can talk about how it is degrading our society and we respond as well. We are part of this echo chamber that goes along with this debate. But I would caution my colleagues who are looking for magic words that sometimes it is very difficult to do it absent a context.

If someone wrote in a song "I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die," would that be seen at outrageous, over-the-topic music advocating someone just murdering someone for sheer joy? I don't think anyone would argue that Johnny Cash somehow had a corrosive effect on American culture. But I also think that sometimes you get into areas where I am not sure I want the gentlemen who are at that table making these calls. I mean, at the explosion of west coast rap, there was a band called NWA. I am actually curious, does anyone know, did they choose to abbreviate their name or did the label force them do? Does anyone happen to know that? I am just curious. Never mind. We will talk about it later.

A band called NWA has had a very popular song called "F the police." You know, Dr. Dre and Snoop had a chorus "187 on an mf cop" as a chorus to their songs. Now, it is outrageous, I mean really it makes your blood boil, the idea that a chorus of a song would talk about murdering a police officer. But if you look at the context of what was going on in L.A. and police brutality and that is what people were screaming about and protesting about and talking about, I am not sure the place to adjudicate it is here or even there. I am not sure what you do. As troubling as these things are, if you start to say we are going to look at a word absent the context of those words, absent a real debate and discussion about those words, I am not sure how you do it. I can tell you something that when the argument and the public debate was going on about those lyrics, it was the first time many in my social circle were even having these discussions. To some degree the music did drive a whole discussion about how you deal with issues of police brutality and relationship with all communities in this country.

So I would be very careful laying the responsibility at anyone's desk. I don't know. When my colleague, my good friend from Florida asked that question, I was thinking to myself, I don't know which answer I would like more, yes, we stop the words from being used, or no, we don't stop the words from being used or some variation like convene a panel of people to decide. It is outrageous and mind-boggling to me that there would be a theme and songs and music and on the Internet people saying don't cooperate with police investigations of crime that are ravaging the same communities these people come from. It is mind-boggling to me. It is mind-boggling that when you ask an artist about don't snitch and he says I wouldn't—how would you respond about a mass murderer moved in next door to you. He said I would move. I mean, that is mind-boggling to me. Now, should I be the one who says that is outrageous? No, I shouldn't. But if I can just use my time to ask a question that has come up in the context of Mr. Gonzalez' question, there is no one here representing the Internet service providers

where I would argue a larger and larger portion of the music is being distributed, promoted, shared, stolen, and Mr. Morris, you clearly are unaware of a lot of the hearings we have done here and how responsive we have been to the industry's complaints about this and how many hearings we have had both in this committee and the Judiciary Committee. But if you decide tomorrow to take the admonitions of some of my colleagues and say we are done, any song that has the "F" word, if your artist says OK, I will take my master and go to the Internet, is there anything stopping them from doing that? I guess the music guys are the best to answer that. Mr. Bronfman?

Mr. BRONFMAN. There is essentially nothing stopping an artist from doing that.

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Morris, is there anything stopping an artist from doing that?

Mr. MORRIS. From going to the Internet?

Mr. WEINER. Yes, from taking and saying if you don't want to put it out, that is fine, Mr. Morris, I will bypass you and I will go—I will take my music and put it up on *dirtylanguagerapper.com* and distribute it that way?

Mr. MORRIS. If the artist is signed to one of our labels, we would own that master, but the truth of the matter is, it would be out, and by the time the courts adjudicated the matter, it would be history. All the music is up on the Internet.

Mr. WEINER. Right, and there is a thousand different points of contact with citizens at this point and you can choose——

Mr. MORRIS. Music is being stolen from the Internet.

Mr. WEINER. I understand, Mr. Morris, and with all—I love you and I appreciate you being here and everything. If you want to start a different hearing, we can come back for that one and it is right down the hall, Judiciary is. I am a member of that committee and we can have that discussion there. This is something we wrestle with as well and frankly it is the subject for a different conversation. But my time is expired. I thank the panel.

Mr. RUSH. I want to thank the gentleman.

Let me just ask, I sit here and I hear you and I understand what you are saying and I appreciate all your testimony, but do you agree that there is a problem? And if there is a problem in terms of negative images, then how do you become a part of the solution to that problem? Given your business, the limitations of your business, but also given the extraordinary power that your businesses have over the minds of particularly young people, how do you become a part of the solution to the problem in our neighborhoods throughout the city—throughout the country? Art imitates life. The images that I see and hear are only a slice of life in the hood. I live in the hood. Where is my slice at in the 'hood and where are other productive American citizens who are struggling to get—young people, the Rutgers basketball team—where do they get represented in these commercial images? Mr. Morris?

Mr. MORRIS. Well, I think that this was a very—a good opening to starting a communication with—I can only speak for my company and I like the way this has all been done. I feel that it has been done in a respectful, fair manner and I intend to respond in a respectful, fair manner and I certainly appreciate the way that

you have handled this and you will hear from us, and I believe everything starts somewhere and we did that today.

Mr. RUSH. Is there any other response? Mr. Liggins?

Mr. LIGGINS. Yes, I have got two points. One, I think that just as in financial markets, consumer markets also tend to self-regulate themselves so as you stated at the outset of the committee gathering here that you believe that gangster rap is on the downside. In fact, hip hop sales are significantly tailing off and I can tell you from an organization that actually plays this music, is immersed in it, that the tastes of the community are sort of waning on the current state of hip hop and that is not something that we are causing, that is something that the consumer is actually causing and getting tired of and it is showing in the record sales. Second, to Mr. Morris's point, the Internet technology, a lot of the opportunity created here on the Hill, has let the horse out of the barn in terms of any of these platforms being able to shield young people from images. It is just that is the nature of the Internet. That is the nature of digital technology. So from my perspective, if you actually want to sort of police the impact that these images have on kids, you should probably start thinking about curriculums in public schools about pop culture, all right, and analyzing pop culture entities, analyzing and dissecting pop culture entities and phenomena and explaining the difference between Britney Spears' activities as we currently see them and a normal activity or a rap song that has something in it that might be misogynistic or violent in terms of police officer activity and what a normal behavior might be, and if you start doing that with 7th, 8th and 9th and 10th graders, even if they don't get it at home, at least they are going to get it at school. So you can have a backup for what is not occurring at home. And I think that that is sort of the policing that you guys could really focus on that I think would make a big difference.

Mr. RUSH. Anyone else? Mr. Dauman?

Mr. DAUMAN. Mr. Chairman, I think these are complex issues that were raised here today. These are societal issues. Certainly it is the ruling media which both reflects and impacts what takes place. You can legislate things like gun control or other issues that affect our youth today and we certainly air a lot of those issues. We are very proud—there was a mention earlier about BET's history. We are very proud that we have authorized the largest programming expenditure in BET's history to fund diverse programming ranging from shows like "Sunday Best" where we try to find the best new gospel singers around the country, or "Exalted" where we celebrate some of the great preachers in our country, to a show called "Made" on MTV where we highlight the efforts of youths to find themselves, and so forth. So we think there is an important dialog and we listen to people. We have very segmented audiences. We reach kids with Nickelodeon and we try to teach them healthy lifestyles but our schools play a role in that as well, parents play a role. We reach older kids through MTV and other networks and we reach young adults through Comedy Central. So we try to take a look at all the different audiences we address and there is always room for improvement.

Mr. RUSH. My time is up, unless anyone else wanted to respond to the question, but my time is up now, and is there anybody else who has a second question they want to ask?

I want to really thank this panel. You have done an extraordinary job. We thank you so much for your time and your participation. Thank you very much, and we will be in discussion with you. Again, this is just the beginning. We intend to engage you in more dialog and participation and action on this particular problem. Thank you so much.

Our next panel will be seated now. Will the second panel please be seated? Mr. Levell Crump, also known as David Banner, Mr. Percy Miller, also known as Master P, and Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, please be seated. Will the second panel be seated, Mr. Banner, Master P?

Let me begin by welcoming our second panel. Let me also thank you for your patience. You didn't have to be here, you were not subpoenaed, you have come voluntarily, and we certainly appreciate that. You are here because you are concerned about the issues that are under consideration this morning and afternoon in this subcommittee. You are here because you want to do, quote, unquote, the right thing and have done, quote, unquote, the right thing. Again, I want to thank you so much for your generous use o f your time. You have been very, very patient to the members of this subcommittee.

Let me begin by welcoming our first witness, Mr. Levell Crump, also known as David Banner, a hip hop artist. David Banner, who is the Republican witness on this panel, is a prominent rapper whose biggest hits were "Like a Pimp" and "Play." He will offer his insights as a hip hop artist whose lyrics and videos are controversial.

Our second witness is Mr. Percy Miller, also known as Master P, the founder and CEO of No Limit Records. Master P is a hip hop icon as a rapper, producer and label executive. While he was famous for promoting "gangster rap" and "bounce hip hop" of the "dirty South," he is currently engaged in forming a record label that promotes positive hip hop messages.

And lastly, our witness on the second panel is Mr. Michael Eric Dyson, Ph.D., who is a professor at Georgetown University. My friend, Michael Eric Dyson, is the author of "Know What I Am: Reflections on Hip Hip," and the other book is "Is Bill Cosby Right or Has the Black Middle Class Lost Its Mind?" Professor Dyson teaches theology, English and African-American studies and is one of America's premiere academic scholars on hip hop. Again, I welcome you and we will open up now with 5 minutes of testimony from Mr. David Banner.

STATEMENT OF LEVELL CRUMP, A.K.A. "DAVID BANNER"

Mr. CRUMP. Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Stearns and members of the committee. My name is David Banner. I am an artist for Universal Recordings, a producer and a label executive. Thank you for inviting my testimony.

This dialog was sparked by the insulting comments made by Don Imus concerning the Rutgers women's basketball team. Imus lost his job but later secured a $1 million contract with another station.

While it seems that he has been rewarded, the hip hop industry is left under public scrutiny. As this dialog played out in the media, the voices of the people who created hip hop music were silenced. We were not invited to participate in most of the panels nor given the opportunity to publicly refute any of the accusations hurled at us. It is of the utmost importance that the people whose livelihood is at stake be made a vital part of this process. That is why I thank you guys today.

I am from Jackson, Mississippi. Jackson is one of the most violent cities in the United States. Much like DC, Jackson stays in the murder capital run. When I was growing up, it was always ranked as one of the top 10 cities for the highest number of murders per capita.

Honestly, rap music is what kept me out of trouble. Statistics would never show the positive side of rap because statistics don't reflect what you don't do, if you don't commit a murder or a crime. When I would feel angry and would want to get revenge, I would listen to Tupac. His anger in a song would replace my anger and I would live vicariously through his music.

Rap music is the voice of the underbelly of America, and in most cases America wants to hide the negative that it dose to its people. Hip hop is that voice, and how dare America even consider not giving us the opportunity to be heard. I am one of the few artists who went to college, and to this day I see my friends who also attended college with me and graduated unable to get jobs. The truth is, what we do sells, and oftentimes artists do try to do different types of music and it doesn't sell. In America, the media only lifts up negativity.

People consider me to be a philanthropist. I give away a quarter of my yearly earnings to send children from impoverished neighborhoods to different cities, to Disneyland. This gives them another vision. Rap music has changed my life and all of those around me. It has given me the opportunity to eat. I remember sending 88 kids from the inner city on a trip. I went to the local newspaper and the television stations only to be told that the trip was not newsworthy, but if I shot somebody it would be all over the news. I threw the largest—listen to me. I threw the largest urban relief concert in history for Katrina. That never made the front cover of a magazine. But as soon as I say something negative and rise up against my own or be sharp at the mouth—no pun intended—I am perceived as being disrespectful to my black leaders. The negativity always overshadows all the positive things that we do as rap artists.

Some might argue that the content of our music serves as poison to the minds of our generation. If by some stroke of the pen, hip hop were silenced, the issues would still be present in our community. Drugs, violence, sexism and the criminal element were here long before hip hop. The Crips, the Bloods, the Vice Lords and the gangsters were here before rap music. Gang violence was here before rap music. Our consumers come from various socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures. While many are underprivileged, a large percentage of those people are educated professionals. The responsibility for their choices does not rest on the shoulders of hip hop.

Still others may raise the concern that the youth having access to our music. Much like the ratings utilized by motion picture associations, our music is given a rating which is displayed on the packaging. This serves to inform the public of the possible adult content.

As such, the probability of shocking the unsuspecting consumer's sensibility is virtually impossible. If the consumer is disinterested or offended by the content of our music, don't buy the CD. Cut the radio off.

Some may argue the verbiage used in our music is derogatory. During slavery, those in authority used the word "n*****" as a means to degrade or emasculate. There was no question of censorship then.

The abuse, accompanied by the label "n*****," was forced and internalized. We had to internalize it. This made the situation easier to digest. Our generation has since assumed ownership of the word, and now that we are capitalizing off the word, now they want to censor it. That is amazing to me. Wow.

The same respect is not often given or extended to hip hop artists as those in other areas. Stephen King and Steven Spielberg are renowned for horrific creations. These movies are embraced as art. Why then is our content not merely deemed horror music. Mark Twain's literary classic "Huckleberry Finn" is still required reading in our classrooms across the United States. The word "n*****" appears approximately 215 times. While some may find this offensive, the book was not banned by all districts because of its artistic value. The same consideration is not given to hip hop music.

As consumers we generally gravitate to and have a higher tolerance for things that we can relate to. As such, it is not surprising that the spirit of hip hop is not easily understood. In 1971, the case of *Cohen* v. *California*, Justice Harlan noted that one man's vulgarity is another man's lyric.

Our troops are currently at war under the guise of liberating other countries while here in America our rights are being threatened daily. This is illustrated by Homeland Security, extensive phone tapping and ill-placed attempts at censorship. If we are not careful, we will find ourselves getting closer to a dictatorship.

And in closing, traditionally multibillion dollar industries have thrived on the premise of violence, sexuality and derogatory content. This capitalistic trend was not created nor introduced by hip hop. It has been here. It is the American way, and I can admit that there are some problems in hip hop but it is only a reflection of what is taking place in our society.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Crump, would you please bring——

Mr. CRUMP. Oh, yes, this is the last sentence.

Mr. RUSH. OK, last sentence.

Mr. CRUMP. Can I go back, because this is very powerful. I can admit that there are some problems in hip hop but it is only a reflection of what is taking place in our society. Hip hop is sick because America is sick.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Crump follows:]

STATEMENT OF DAVID BANNER
BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRADE, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

September 25, 2007

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is David Banner. I am an artist for SRC Recordings, a producer, and label executive. Thank you for inviting my testimony.

This dialogue was sparked by the insulting comments made by Don Imus concerning the Rutgers women's basketball team. Imus lost his job, but later, may have secured a million dollar contract with another station.

While he appears to have been rewarded, the hip hop industry is left under public scrutiny. As this "dialogue" played out in the media, the voices of the people who create hip hop and rap music were silenced. We were not invited to participate on any panels, nor given the opportunity to publicly refute any of the accusations hurled at us. While Congress lacks the power to censor, it is of the utmost importance that the people who whose livelihood is at stake be made a vital part of this process.

I am from Jackson, Mississippi. Jackson is one of the most violent cities in the United States. Much like Washington, DC, Jackson stayed in the murder capital run. When I was growing up, it always ranked as one of the top ten cities for the highest number of murders per capita. Being located right below Chicago, a lot of kids got in trouble up there and were sent to Jackson by their grandparents, who were from Jackson.

The by product of this migration was violence. I was blessed to have a very strong man for a father, and a very-very strong woman for a Mother.

Honestly, rap music is what kept me out of trouble. Statistics will never show the positive side of rap because statistics don't reflect what you "don't" do...if you "don't" commit a murder or a crime. When I would feel angry and would think about getting revenge, I would listen to Tupac. His anger in a song was a replacement for my anger. I lived vicariously through his music.

Rap music is the voice of the underbelly of America. In most cases, America wants to hide the negative that it does to its people. Hip hop is the voice...and how dare America not give us the opportunity to be heard. I am one of the few artists who went to college. I still see my friends who, as college graduates, are unable to get a job. The truth is that what we do sells. Often artists try to do different types of music and their music doesn't sell. In America, the media only lifts up negativity.

People consider me a philanthropist. I give away close to a quarter of my yearly earnings to send children from impoverished neighborhoods to different cities...to Disney land. This gives them another vision. Rap music has changed my life, and the lives of those around me. It has given us the opportunity to eat. I remember sending 88 kids from the inner city on a trip. I went to the local newspaper and TV station, only to be told that the trip wasn't "newsworthy". But if I had shot somebody, it would have been all over the news. I threw the largest urban relief concert in history. That never made the front cover of a magazine. But as soon as I say something negative, rise up against my own, or become sharp at the mouth (no pun intended), I am perceived as being disrespectful to Black leaders. That negativity overshadows all of the positive things that I've done as a rap artist.

Some might argue that the content of our music serves as poison to the minds of our generation. If by some stroke of the pen Hip hop was silenced, the issues would still be present in our communities. Drugs, violence, and the criminal element were around long before hip hop existed. Our consumers come from various socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures. While many are underprivileged, a large percentage are educated professionals. The responsibility for their choices does not rest on the shoulders of hip hop.

Still others raise concerns about the youth having access to our music. Much like the ratings utilized by the Motion Picture Association of America, our music is given ratings which are displayed on the packaging. These serve to inform the public of possible adult content.

As such, the probability of "shocking" the unsuspecting consumer's sensibilities is virtually impossible. If the consumer is disinterested or offended by the content of our music, one could simply not purchase our cds. The music that is played on the radio must comply with FCC guidelines. Again, this provides a safeguard. Ultimately, the burden of monitoring the music that minors listen to rests with their parents.

Some argue that the verbiage used in our music is derogatory. During slavery, those in authority used the word "Nigger" as a means to degrade and emasculate. There was no push for censorship of the word back then.

The abuse that accompanied the label "Nigger" forced us to internalize it. This made the situation easier to digest. Our generation has since assumed ownership of the word. Now that we are capitalizing off the use of the word, why is it so important that it be censored? The intent and spirit of the word "Nigga" in rap music does not even remotely carry the same meaning nor historical intent. Attempting to censor the use of a word that merely depicts deep camaraderie is outrageous. People should focus less on the "offensive" words in our music, and more on the messages that are being conveyed.

The same respect is often not extended to Hip hop artist as to those in other arenas. Steven King and Steven Spielberg are renowned for their horrific creations. These

movies are embraced as "art". Why then is our content not merely deemed horror music? Mark Twain's literary classic Huckleberry Finn is still required reading in classrooms across the United States of America. The word "Nigger" appears in the book approximately 215 times. While some may find this offensive, the book was not banned by all school districts because of its artistic value.

The same consideration should be extended to hip hop music.

As consumers, we generally gravitate to and have a higher tolerance for things that we can relate to. As such, it is not surprising that the spirit of Hip Hop is not easily understood. In the 1971 case of Cohen vs. California, Justice Harlan noted that "one man's vulgarity is another man's lyric..." The content and verbiage illustrated in our music may be viewed as derogatory...or unnecessary...but it is a protected means of artistic expression. In 2005 Al Sharpton, who is a proponent of censorship, stated on CNN that "rappers have the right to talk about the violence they come from...if they're going to rap about it and sing about it, they have the First Amendment right." Much like imagery supplied via television, literature, and by other genres of music, we merely provide a product that appeals to our patrons.

Our troops are currently at war under the guise of liberating other countries. While here in America, our rights are being threatened daily. This is illustrated by homeland security, extensive phone tapping and ill placed attempts at censorship.

Traditionally multi-billion dollar industries have thrived on the premise of violence, sexuality, and derogatory content. This capitalistic trend was not created nor introduced by Hip Hop. It's been here. It's the American way.

I can admit that there are some problems in hip hop. But it is only a reflection of what is taking place in our society. Hip Hop is sick because America is sick.

Thank you.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Miller, you are recognized for 5 minutes for testimony. Thank you so much for your participation and your overall work. Thank you so much.

STATEMENT OF PERCY MILLER, A.K.A, "MASTER P"

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Congressman. I want to thank everybody for allowing me to be here. I am not here to put down hip hop because I want everybody to know, I didn't prepare a speech. What I am going to say is coming from the heart and I think after we leave today we should come up with some type of solution. I watched the first panel, and I want to commend David Banner for being here and I think he is an educated brother, and hip hop is being educated. I think we are on the same premises. My whole goal for being here is to preserve hip hop, and I know this is a culture that is involved—and I watched the first panel. We talked about society. It is definitely a problem from society but we are inflaming this problem but not being responsible, and I want to take that responsibility.

First I want to tell everybody here that I was once part of the problem, and hopefully as I move on in life and I raise kids, I want to be a part of the solution, and the reason why we have such a big problem right now is that nobody wants to take responsibility. And I made a lot of money off of hip hop, gangsta rap music. That was all I had in my community so I feel Mr. Banner's frustration because people are only looking at the artist, and I am going to tell you guys right now, it is not the artist. Because when you look at society, I have been on both sides, the business side and on the artist side, and I think that is why I can really explain where we are right now in society.

Right now we stop focusing on the artist because to me, in this business, you look at society as a hip hop artist, this is a business. When I watch everybody get up here and talk about this, this is a financial business. Hip hop is a $4 billion business, but is the artist benefiting from that? No, we can set up things to where the artist is being a puppet and we have puppet masters. So what I am saying by that is, if we stop focusing on each other—and I watched a bunch of these guys go in the back and me and Mr. Banner I hope after this that this is not a debate for me and him, that we could sit down as brothers and sisters, the audience. The other guys and their business, when they went in the back, they all communicate. They understand the big picture, and once we get us to understand the big picture, we definitely can save our kids and our community, and this is about relief, it is about growing up.

Growing up in society is so important, and can I be here 10 years ago and tell you the same thing I could tell you? No. Will we all get to that where we can grow up and understand the valuable part that we could play to preserve hip hop because to us and our kids, this is the way of life. This is the way we take our kids out of the ghetto, and for me, I could honestly say I was only in it for the money. I had nobody to pat me on the back to say P, you could do something else with your life. Think about the music, think about the content. Kids are listening. When I changed my life, I understand that my kids—I was in a car with my own kids and I turned on the radio and we turned my CD on and I noticed when

my kids were in the car, I had to turn the music down, and I say you know what, I need to fix my own problem. We have to start fixing it as an individual.

And I am hopeful after today everybody that was on his panel earlier, they all have the same intents, I mean, that we can all communicate and start putting some great property, some great music, some great visuals. I want to meet with these guys and say what can we do, let us fix the problem, because even these executives are not the problem. People haven't realized Debra Lee is not the problem. Everybody has a job to do. But what I am saying is if we start thinking about what we are doing and understand just like Mr. Banner said, when you look at society, gang violence, 800,000 gang members are born right now. Twenty-five percent of the murders and the crimes are committed by gang bangers, and my thing is, with my music, I can say music do put you in a mood. I look at my past history of music and I say to myself, wow, I wasn't thinking. I was thinking about my own feelings. My brother died, so I was angry. My cousin died. I had 12 other friends that got murdered in my community so I just made the music that I felt, not realizing that I am affecting kids for tomorrow. And so if I can do anything today and change that, I am going to take a stand and do that. I hope this society don't judge me by my past.

And one thing I have for a solution, that we have to treat the hip hop industry just like the NBA. I figure we have to form some type of union, what we can control, because the executives in this business right now can't control. We could hit these kids' pockets. Anybody that have a money problem, say if you put out this type of music or you don't change or think about what you say, we are going to hurt your pockets with it. People are going to change because most of these guys are in it for the money, and it is a business.

And I also want to tell you that looking back at everything that I did and said and taking this to the next level, us as people, we have to figure out it is a lack of knowledge. It is a lack of knowledge and it is a lack of vision. Back then I had no vision, I had nobody to give me this vision. So if we start getting with our kids and talking to our kids and figuring out how can we give them this knowledge and this vision that we can take our game to the next level, how we can prepare our kids prepare for—right now we are preparing our kids to lose. That is what the problem is. That is why we got so many angry artists right now. We are preparing our kids once they get this money, they don't know about taxes, they don't know about handling this money. I watched a lot of guys up here. They are able to transform to other different companies. After it is over with a hip hop artist's career, he is going back to the 'hood and he is put in that environment with somebody who say hey, man, you did all this and now you turn your back on us. But I am not turning my back on my people. I want to help us grow and I can figure out whatever solution I want to build. I think if we look at the crime right now, we have to put facilities up.

I want to challenge these executives. I want to challenge the Government to say you know what, let us put some facilities with a gymnasium and a library so to teach these kids how to read and how to grow something more than just music. And let us think

about the consciousness that we are putting into our music. So I figure we form some type of union like the NBA has. They have a union that they talk about the music—I mean they talk about what happens on and off the court and we start fining kids for what they do, I think we could change our music industry and preserve it and save hip hop and that is my goals right now, to stop pointing the fingers and let us all get together to figure out how to preserve this billion-dollar industry and also teach our kids about equity funds, about growing, about building a generation of wealth instead teaching our kids, destroying them saying we are going to take the next one out and put the next one in. When 50 Cent ain't hot no more, we are looking for somebody else. Now, where do 50 Cent go after this? Well, why is he not a company executive so now he could understand the problem and say this is what I have been through, let us save some of these kids. But I think the problem is right now we are focusing on just the orders and we have to take the focus off the orders and we got to come together as what we are doing today but we have to get behind the scenes and let us keep this going.

Mr. RUSH. Thank you very much for your commentary and for your testimony.

Dr. Dyson, 5 minutes, please. I am kind of liberal with my 5 minutes but 5 minutes, please.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL ERIC DYSON, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. DYSON. Thank you, Congressman, Reverend Honorable Rush, and to all of the members of the committee and to my fellow panelists here, Misters Banner and Miller.

It is a deep and profound honor to be here today simply because this is such an important subject, that is, to draw a sharp and powerful distinction between edifying and intensely uplifting art and art that lacks what some people say is cultural and social imagination. But what is more interesting and more provocative even still is the fact that we are wrestling with ideas that transcend a particular art for or aesthetic expression, because when you talk about misogyny, the cruel hatred of women, sexism, sentiments directed against women because they are women or patriarchy, which is the conscious or unconscious belief that men's lives should determine how everybody else lives and therefore establish values, you can't start with hip hop to look at the origins of that. We talk about religious institutions, we speak about educational institutions and God forbid we speak about political institutions. It would behoove us to have the same self-critical impulse that hip hop has had within the walls of these hallowed chambers. I think for me, it is a powerful and necessary issue to speak about the way in which black women in particular have been degraded and demonized in art forms that claim to speak for the broader spectrum of African-American thought culture or position.

But what is equally interesting is the fact that there are deep roots of American culture when it comes to demonizing women. It didn't start with Snoop Dogg. It didn't start with anybody who has been associated with hip hop culture. That is white supremacist ideology predicated upon capitalist expansion of opportunity. Talk

about commerce. We are in the right place. American is built upon the degrading images perpetuated against black men brought here as slaves, used for free labor to build a country that they are presently denied.

So when we think in terms of opportunity, so when we think about lethal misogyny, I don't want to dodge a bullet. Am I offended by it and do I think that things within certain hip hop communities have gone too far? Absolutely. I write about it. I talk about it. I think about it. I argue with rappers. But I don't begin there with them. When Jesus met the woman at the well, he didn't have a conversation about her promiscuity, alleged, because then she would have to account for the five men who abandoned her. He said, give me a drink of water. You start where people are. There is a conversation about misogyny and sexism and we don't mention homophobia because polite society agrees that gay and lesbian people shouldn't have too much rights to begin with. So this is where hip hop may agree with common civil society. So what is interesting is that the gay and lesbian people don't even—it is "B" word, it is the "N" word, it is the "H" word but it is not the "F" word or the "L" word.

So what is interesting is that all of us have blind spots when it comes to articulating viewpoints that are edifying and uplifting. Not only am I against censorship because I don't want anybody to tell me what kind of book to write—when I wrote a book arguing with Mr. Bill Cosby, "How dare you argue against an icon who has articulated positions that are critical to our society's perpetuation in a good sense?" I agree with that. But I also think he said some stuff that qualifies for gangsterism against black women. He said, "Most of these women are promiscuous, they name their kids the wrong things." He said, "I am trying to stop you from having sex with your grandma. When she is 15, she has a baby, when she is 13, she has a baby, you do the math." Now, that is not calling a woman a "B" or "H" but it is scandalously misinterpreting sociologically the context within which she emerges and what she means.

So if we are going to deal with misogyny and sexism and patriarchy and homophobia, we have got to dig deeper into the archives of America culture and we have got to look at the practices, the behaviors and the beliefs that are perpetuated in Congress, that are perpetuated in business affairs and perpetuated in entrepreneurial circles and in religious institutions. Black women, let us not just march on the record companies, let us march on churches that deny black women who are 75 to 85 percent of the congregation access to leadership positions that they give their money to to support. Let us ban some preaching sermons that perpetuate—and they are worse than hip hop because they get God involved. Now they are saying God wants you to be a second-class citizen.

So I am appalled by the deep and lethal misogyny I see expressed across the culture. I wouldn't want to quarantine the crazy, the hip hop. Hip hop in one sense does us the service of being explicit and articulate about its rage, although misplaced against women where other sections of the culture don't do so, and ultimately I think what we have to wrestle with is that these images that are degrading certainly are reflected in hip hop but did not

begin there. Look at the self-critique. Lauren Hill said, "Even after all my logic and my theory, I had to mf so you ignorant n****** hear me." Right? If you think about Tupac Shakur, "Somebody wake me up dreaming, I started as the semen swimming upstream, planted in the womb while screaming. On the top was my pops, my mama hollering stop from a single drop. This is what they get. Not to disrespect my people, but my papa was a loser. Only plan he had for mama was to blank her and abuse her and even as a seed I could see his plan for me, stranded on welfare, another broken family." I mean, listen to the cries. Even Master P said he was unenlightened but I think he was enlightened when he wrote the lyrics, "I don't own no planes, I don't own no boats, I don't ship no dope from coast to coast." I am telling you that even in the mouths of young evolving artists like Mr. Banner from Mississippi, Mr. Miller from Louisiana, they are represented in Katrina's misery. The country cannot come to their rescue to take them rooftops but want to now indict them for the language they use in the aftermath of being abandoned. I say that is a metaphor for what America has done, and thank God for hip hop at its best.

At its best, hip hop has allowed the expression of degraded, marginalized, yes, mostly young black men who often see their expanse and their opportunity at the expense of woman but that is no different than the black church or American institutions of politics. I think we have to confront it. I think we cannot limit it to African-American youth and I think we have to be honest about the way in which this music, at its best, mind you, has allowed the expression of young people who have failed to be duly recognized and as a result of that have little recourse except to use the language, the metaphors, the similes, the analogies and the beautiful vernacular at hand.

So as I end, I think that what we must do is to constantly pay attention to the self-critical impulses within the culture itself. How come it is, why is it that "these guys drink champagne, toast death and pain like slaves on a ship, brag about who got the flyest chain." Why isn't that music selling? Now, some people say this. Well, the declining music sales among hip hop artists prove that the American public is through with them. Well, if that is the case, you are losing the argument because the so-called positive rappers in hip hop are even further behind, so what is the public saying there. When a good movie like "Talk to Me" comes out, all the people who clamor for positive expression, how come they didn't go see that film? I think the crocodile tears of people who claim to want edifying art is problematic because I don't want edifying art, I want complex art. It is not positive versus negative. Some people think that I if speak in defense of gay and lesbian people within an ecclesiastical context, theologically that is negative. So I could never rest upon negative versus positive.

Mr. RUSH. Dr. Dyson, please——

Mr. DYSON. OK. Let me end here. Let me end by saying this then. I think that hip hop culture at its best is a necessary expression of degraded, demoralized young people who find the cultural expression of their identities and the culture that is fundamentally hostile to them as something they have to do, and I think what we should be about doing is interrogating and being more introspective

about the practices that are negative in our own communities than join with hip hop to clean up across the board the negativity that we find there.

Mr. RUSH. I want to thank the witnesses. I have heard a lot of testimony and let me just be real clear as I stated at the opening of this hearing. We are not here to indict hip hop nor are we here to indict hip hop artists. I for one am very proud of the hip hop genre. I know where it began. I know what it has become. I am proud of some of the things that it has done. It has created opportunities for young minority African-American men and women to emerge from the depths of the ghetto to become icons in the corporate world. It has created thousands if not hundreds of thousands of jobs for people who are able to express their gifts in this competitive, capitalistic society. I find that it is an art form. However, given all that, I know that there is a problem, a deep-seated, deeply rooted problem that exists in our community, and a paycheck is not an excuse for being a part of that problem. You have to emerge as all of us do and as all of us did. Those who come from the same communities, the same kind of neighborhoods, we all aspire to get out of those neighborhoods. But there is a difference between exploiting the pain and the problem and being a solution to the problem.

I am looking today in this hearing for those again who are committed to becoming a part of the solution as opposed to being a part of the problem. I agree about the rage. I got rage. I am a Member of Congress. I still have deep-seated rage. Well, how is that rage channeled? Am I supposed to take my rage and then spew it out in a counterproductive way so that I can get paid by others to exploit my rage or do I have an overall greater responsibility, a higher responsibility to try to take my rage and be creative in an approach to becoming a part of the solution as opposed to being a part of the problem.

Brothers, let me say this. You can't justify to me the use of the word "n*****" because my slave master used it. There is no justification at all. My slave master raped my mama and my ancestors. I am not going to buy into that, all right? As a matter of fact, I can't condone that at all. I have to deny that approach. I don't want to adopt the mores, the metaphors, the machinations and the mentality of my slave master. I want to move myself and my community from those kind of anchors. I don't want to ape and imitate my slave master. I want to create something more life giving, something that affirms my dignity as opposed to affirming my death.

Let me just ask a question here. What is the responsibility to our communities and to this Nation, what is the responsibility of the hip hop art form, the artist, the record owners, the consumer? What is the responsibility? What is the shared responsibility in terms of solving these problems that we all agree are problems in our community? What are the responsibilities? Mr. Crump, do you want to start?

Mr. CRUMP. Yes. I want to start by first of all saying all the philanthropy, all the things that I do in my neighborhood have nothing to do with David Banner as a rapper. Now, I represent the hip hop nation but I can honestly say, this is my opinion and my opin-

ion only, I don't feel that it is any rapper's responsibility to do anything. I think it is your responsibility as a man, not the type of rapper you are, the type of man you are. I was that type of man when I was hustling. I was that type of man when I was a teacher. You go back and you look at my history, I have always cared about poor people and children. I do what I do because I am that type of man. It has nothing to do with my job. It is amazing to me that the burdens of the world are placed on young black men who don't have the power to move anything. We don't put that same responsibility on our president. We don't put that same responsibility on our Congressmen. We don't put that same responsibility on our parents. We talk about children. It is not really about rap music, it is about the fact that we are having children when we are not prepared to raise them. So we point the finger back at somebody else, America, and I don't want to go into the war but America talks about weapons of mass destruction but when I looked at it, I was like, don't we have the most receipts and don't we have weapons of mass destruction? If we want to talk about weapons of mass destruction, let us get rid of ours. So and me saying that of course, it is not right, but the thing is, when it comes down to it, it is still just a song. Arnold Schwarzenegger can be the Governor of California but in his movies, he killed half of Cambodia, then he went to Mars and blew up Mars and then came back and killed, but it is fine because he is a white man and he is an actor, so that is OK, let him be the Governor. That is just fine. But if Snoop Dogg talks about the things that he actually sees in his community, whether fact or fiction, let us see what we can do to him.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Miller.

Mr. MILLER. Well, my thing, I think it is a responsibility for us to preserve and prepare the future which is our kids. We got to take a stand. We can't just keep going where we are at right now, not knowing that it is tomorrow. I think as an artist, we only think about where we are now. We have no vision. And I think right now what we are seeing here today is, we have to understand that knowledge is the most important thing and not education. I think that education where we are, education is so important for our people but once we apply the knowledge, it is like right now what David Banner is saying, I think once we get the knowledge, we really can take what we are doing to the next level because I think we are all on the same mission. Because what he is saying, but we also have to think about what we are doing, and I think if we give our kids that vision, we can make that change. We got to start saying I can't be the person that I used to be back in the day, I got to grow, and I want to figure out some kind of way to teach these kids to grow and realize that if I say a bad word, I am a parent, my kids are not going to say that because I am going to teach them to be better than me, and that is what I want to do. I want to help my kids understand one thing in life, yes, your daddy can only be an inspiration. But with my son, Romeo, he is going to college because he never made any profanities. His TV shows were on Nickelodeon. He could be better than me and that is what I want to instill into my kids and I also want to instill into them, let them know that you can live older than 25, you can live older than 30. We want to build this next generation to be better than us and I

think that is what Martin Luther King and all the other great people did for us, and I wanted to give that back to my kids and the people that is coming after me.

Mr. RUSH. I am woefully over time, over my time, and I am going to now recognize——

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Chairman, if it is any consolation to you, I am going to have to leave for a 2 o'clock meeting and I yield my time to you, sir.

Mr. RUSH. Well, thank you.

Mr. Dyson?

Mr. DYSON. I think that—look, there is no essential contradiction between what David Banner is saying and what Percy Miller is saying, that Master P and David Banner are both talking about a trajectory of transformation and the possibility of change, and that is to say, people are constantly evolving as human beings. You can look at your own life, Mr. Rush, as an extraordinary freedom fighter from the very beginning. When you are part of the Black Panthers, you are part of an organization that was demonized, that was negatively portrayed. I am writing now the new introduction to Huey Newton's revolutionary suicide volume. A lot of people put the brother down. People made mistakes but essentially what the Black Panthers were arguing for was for the reorganization of the logic of American capitalism and the revolutionary transformation of the society. I see what you are doing today as an evolution along that same trajectory. As a minister and Member of Congress, you have taken the challenge and responsibility of evolving and changing and making that transformation more coherent morally than perhaps before but also with that same impulse. I see what these young men are doing as extraordinary. I think artists do have a responsibility, as Mr. Banner said, as a human being, as a citizen of a global community. We all have a responsibility to do the right thing and I think that doesn't mean that hip hop should somehow be exonerated from that critique. Hip hop has a huge amount of serious self-critical impulses going along with it, but if you don't listen to hip hop, then you don't know that a lot of people who are so-called underground are mad at some of this commercial stuff. They are mad that they can't even be heard, and I think that is very important.

Let me say one thing about the "N" word here. I know Mr. Banner spoke about that. I think that we have to be complex about the "N" word. It is not simply whether or not—and you made a brilliant and eloquent testimony that you didn't want to simply reproduce the pathology that was transmitted to you by white supremacist overlords, and I think that is absolutely right. But words are complex and meanings are flexible and I think when black people have appropriated a term of derision—the night he died, Martin Luther King, Jr., according to the autobiography of Andrew Young, said to Mr. Young when he came into his room, because he had not seen Mr. Young the entire day, "Little n*****, where you been?" I don't think Martin Luther King, Jr., was a self-hating, degrading black person. No, he did not stand up in public and deploy that term because probably he would have found that offensive to the nth degree and he understood the political context of language and how that can be interpreted. But I am simply saying that the use

of the "N" word didn't begin with hip hop. I heard ministers and preachers talk about it, bishops talk about it. I heard respected members of the community talk about it. There is a communication gap and a generational gap between young people who have circulated that term for global expression out of the political context in which it emerged so that means there are some people in Japan who don't even understand that that was a term of derision and are now using a term in a way that we find offensive because they didn't understand it. So all of us are responsible for being educated and enlightened.

Mr. RUSH. Thank you, Dr. Dyson. I must apologize because I didn't recognize my Republican ranking member, and now I recognize the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Stearns.

Mr. STEARNS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me just thank the witnesses for coming and I think it is very interesting and enlightening I think for everybody to hear your statements, so I appreciate you taking the time.

One of the questions that came up on this hearing when we talked to the executives, how much influence they have on you, perhaps not the CEO of Warner or the CEO of some of these music companies but has there been in your relationship with them, have the industry executives ever asked you to alter your music or lyrics, and if so, if you can recollect under what circumstances, and I will start with you, Mr. Crump, and then Mr. Miller.

Mr. CRUMP. Actually they have, and I personally have a problem with that, I must add, but they send our music through all kind of boards and we have to write out our lyrics and present our lyrics, and I can honestly say I am one of the artists probably has the worst potty mouth than anybody could ever see in the world and I do and I stand for that because the situation in which I arose out of reflect that, and I am going to answer your question, but I want to make this statement before I forget it. If Congress wants to change hip hop, they can start with Congress Heights. That is right down the block. If you want to see why we rap the way that we rap, go to Congress Heights. You don't even have to come to Mississippi. I asked you to come to Mississippi and spend 2 days. Because it is funny, you guys make these different speeches but when you go home, you go home to a nice house and some pretty nice kids who will probably get a job because of your influence. It is not the case where we are from. But to answer your question, yes, especially BET. It is so hard to get my videos on BET. It is to the point I understand the disrespect of women but it gets to the point where you can't even have a girl in the video no more. They are going overboard. To me, it is OK to——

Mr. STEARNS. So Mr. Crump, you are saying that when you submit your music, your lyrics to the executives, they censor it?

Mr. CRUMP. No, they don't censor it. What they do is, they go through the music with a fine-tooth comb and make sure—and I have seen the situation where they will bleep your music out without you knowing. So I guess in a way they do sometimes, but I know that it definitely goes through a board and especially when it comes to the videos.

Mr. STEARNS. Do they come back to you and say, Mr. Crump, or——

Mr. CRUMP. No, sometimes it don't make it back to us. It goes straight out to the public.

Mr. STEARNS. OK.

Mr. CRUMP. I have heard music of mine that has been altered without me saying that it was cool but that is how the game goes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Miller, how about you?

Mr. MILLER. I have been listening to Mr. Banner. I will go this part, and I will give you guys this real invaluable——

Mr. STEARNS. Remember, the question is, have industry executives asked you to alter your music or lyrics? If so, under what circumstance? I think Mr. Crump answered that. I was just hoping you could tell us.

Mr. MILLER. I will explain that to you guys but I think I want to go back to the subject and explain that to you. I keep talking about education and knowledge. I think right now you have to understand that education and knowledge is two different things and I think Mr. Banner is right on, and we are talking about the same thing but what I don't understand is, me and him talking about the same thing and he is being here as a Republican witness for this subject, and I think that we need to really understand knowledge, what is so important about it. I am going to give you knowledge from the record business. I have been on both sides. On this side of the table is that they have A&R departments and they can screen your music and say I don't want to put this out, you guys can't say this, because they have done this all the time, and I think after this here, we really need to get together and understand because we all talking about the same thing and we all are being scrutinized for something that we have no participation in, because at the end of the day this is about finance, this is about money, this is an uncontrolled situation. So they really can screen your music and they do. But we——

Mr. STEARNS. Can you actually say in your case that you wrote some lyrics and did you have to go through what Mr. Crump said? Did they actually change the lyrics of yours?

Mr. MILLER. I am kind of different because I had a distribution deal and that is why I said I am sorry for the stuff that I did and I understand it because I had nobody to pat me on the back, but it has got to a point where somebody could come and say you look at——

Mr. STEARNS. I am talking about your lyrics now.

Mr. MILLER. Yes, talking about my lyrics.

Mr. STEARNS. He or she came to you and said da, da, da, da, da and——

Mr. MILLER. At a time in my life people say listen to this song, you need to change this and I had to change it.

Mr. STEARNS. You had to change it for——

Mr. MILLER. Because think about what I said. Most kids right now, they are just in it for the money. I was in it for the money at the time, I could honestly say this.

Mr. STEARNS. I understand.

Mr. Chairman, I just——

Mr. DYSON. And I want to say no record company has changed my lyrics as of yet.

Mr. MILLER. Not yet.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I have just a little bit more time, considering the situation.

Mr. RUSH. Yes, please.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Crump, I think just the creative process of you coming up with your songs, are you responsible for the initial content of your music or do you have like—you sit down with friends or do you try out with a girlfriend or some——

Mr. CRUMP. I have—excuse me—the full responsibility of everything that I say regardless of—it is one thing that I always say, it is not Universal's responsibility, it is not my friends' responsibility. It is solely my responsibility, and there may be things that affect me but I am a man. I take full responsibility for everything that I say.

Mr. STEARNS. And so you wrote all the lyrics yourself, and then if they get changed, it is because the executives of the music——

Mr. CRUMP. No, but the fact is, that doesn't happen much, and a lot of times if it is something that is actually changed, it is something that has to do—like let us say if something happened at 9/11 or something is going on with the president, something of that magnitude, and it is really nothing—they are not nitpicking on every different subject. It is not a censorship at all.

Mr. STEARNS. OK. Mr. Miller, this question is, in your creative process, you are sitting here, you are a young man. You came up with these lyrics. These are all your own content that you created yourself or did you have——

Mr. MILLER. Well, it is created from me, it is creating from painting a picture, looking out my window, some of things I went through, some of the things people that I know that went through.

Mr. STEARNS. So your life experiences and just sitting there——

Mr. MILLER. Well, I think mine is—to be honest with you, I lost my brother at a young age so mine was more of a cry of anger saying man, what could I do in this community, I mean, why is this happening to us, why is my mother going to a funeral, why am I going to a funeral, why am I in this situation and what could I do to get out so I think at the end of the day what is——

Mr. STEARNS. It was a catharsis for you?

Mr. MILLER. Yes. But think about it. I think at the end of the day, what we are not doing is, we are not listening to the end of the music. Just like he said, some of my music might start off to get these people, but at the end of the day I am going to try to leave with some type of message so they say I want to make them think and I think it is a part of growing up and maturing.

Mr. STEARNS. Dr. Dyson, I have got a question that perhaps goes to one of your books. You have written that the rapper Tupac Shakur wanted to "combat the anti-intellectualism of hip hop." And I thought I would give you an opportunity to further elaborate on that idea of his perspective, Shakur's perspective, if you could.

Mr. DYSON. Yes, sir. Thank you very much for that. I think that Tupac was in concert with Richard Hofstetter who wrote a book in 19, was it 63 or before, about the anti-intellectualism of America. He talked about the choice of Eisenhower over Adlai Stevenson as a critical turn in the attribution of anti-intellectual sentiments among the broad American populous. I am not trying to make Tupac Shakur Richard Hofstetter. I am suggesting, however, that

anti-intellectualism is a species that is not particular or peculiar to hip hop. It is an American disease, one with somebody being tendentious and negative could say this is the White House for ample evidence. What I would suggest is that anti-intellectualism is deep and problematic across the board and hip hop has elements of it. This is why Tupac read deeply, thought critically, read many books. I went to the home he shared with a woman and I read the books for myself. I saw them for myself and I think that he did combat the anti-intellectualism of this culture, not only in hip hop but more broadly. But it is necessary to say that it is an anti-intellectual strain that manifests itself there as it manifests itself across the board, and I think the power of what these two artists have done here today is to display that you can be highly articulate and intelligent, use words in productive and provocative ways and use those words to inform and inspire. You think about a rapper like Mos Def who said you can laugh and criticize Michael Jackson if you want to; Woody Allen molested and married his stepdaughter. They show Woody and Sunni at the playoff game. Now, sit back and think about that. Would he get the same if his name was Woody Black? So when you think about the use of words to combat anti-intellectualism, Tupac was one of the greatest. He said, "Somebody help me, tell me where to go from here because even thugs cry but do the Lord care," but he also "Just the other day I got munched by some crooked cops and to this day them same cops on the beat getting major pay. But when I get my check they taking tax out so we paying the cops to knock the blacks out." That is a powerful antidote to the anti-intellectualism that prevails and I think we need more, not less, then a guy like that.

Mr. STEARNS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Illinois, Ms. Schakowsky.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I want to describe to you for a second how I am feeling about this riveting debate. I am feeling like how can I ask something that doesn't make me look like just categorized as a privileged white woman who doesn't really get it and who can't recite any of the rap music, and I think that the way I feel in part describes the problem that we have in all sitting down together and talking about the larger problem or issue and the specific issue of rap music, is that in some ways we come from very different perspectives and it is hard really to get into each other's head. Writers are always told, write about our own experience and then when young rappers do that, well, the experience is painful and it is mean and graphic and sometimes ugly and we don't want to really—we don't really mean it. I started this morning thinking about it from the standpoint of a woman and a mother and a grandmother of three little girls and thinking about the music that they listen to or that I hope they listen to, which is important in their lives, and then the feelings they have about themselves after they hear it, so I really—I was thinking not so much about racism as sexism and how it—and so I guess I want to ask the artists first, when you-well, I guess especially Mr. Crump, when you sing these words which I assume—and I don't know them—do use the "H" word and the "B" word, do you think about the women who may be listening to this and what do you think about that?

Mr. CRUMP. I am going to be very honest with you. Last year I went through the worst depression that—I mean, I can't describe it. And during that depression, I had the money, I had the cars, but in this depression I was wondering if I was doing my people more harm, and I went to a preacher that had 30 people in his congregation and then I went to a preacher in St. Louis who had 5,000 people in his congregation, and it was funny because when the congregation went away, both of them said the same thing. They pulled me to the side and they said boy, keep rapping. They said yes, there are some negative things that come out the words that you say but you are from a state of pain, you are coming from pain. My mother told me once, she said Levell, she said if you close the door on your hand regardless of what anybody say, nine times out of 10, and excuse me, you are going to say "s***" When you slam your door, you may not say it in here but when you are at home, that is what you are going to say. If it describes the pain that our people are going through, and the truth, if we stop talking about it, the dialog stops.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I guess I am not talking about the pain that you feel but is there any sense of a pain that you may inflict by putting down women through your music?

Mr. CRUMP. When we go to McDonald's, do we think about the pain that we inflict making the United States unhealthy? Everything that we do as Americans has some kind of consequence to it.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. But——

Mr. CRUMP. And what I would say is, if a parent—like my mother honestly told me when I was growing up in Mississippi, and I am going to be honest with you, they still call us n***** in Mississippi. So my mother and my grandmother made sure they told me every day that I was beautiful. So when people ask me did I see right through them in Mississippi and maybe I was blinded because of my parents. My parents made me feel so beautiful that maybe yes, it was working. I thought it was. But I did have those parents there to teach me then. So in me saying that and what you also have to understand because we do come from different cultures and I had this in my speech and I skipped over it for time, but I said that the intent and spirit of the word "n*****" or "b****" in rap music does not even remotely carry the same meaning nor historical intent, and attempting to censor the word that music depicts be camaraderie is outrageous. In saying that, you may hear us say the word "n*****" and the word "b****" and in some situations, I will admit, it is meant in a negative way because regardless of whether we admit it or not, those type of people do exist in society and we are describing a certain type of person, and we must admit that they do exist. But in most cases, it is a form of camaraderie, and when people hear it from the outside, then they are like, they are so mean to each other, but it don't mean the same thing.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Dr. Dyson, would you comment on that? I am willing to acknowledge that maybe in some ways I don't get it but when I hear these words I feel like women are being put down in ways that are really bad.

Mr. DYSON. Yes, absolutely. I think that there is no question that the rhetorical contempt that is aimed at women is lamentable,

should be talked about, should be confronted and should be articulated without question. What is interesting is that when I said earlier, and I have now a chance to explicate it a bit, is that the virtue, if we can call it that, of hip hop is that you don't really have to guess. If there is lethal viewpoint expressed against women, which we should oppose, which we should talk about, which we should explore, which we should explain, which we should get at the root of——

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Or justify? I mean——

Mr. DYSON. No, not justify. I mean, you can——

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I feel like I am——

Mr. DYSON. There is no justification in my mind for it but what is interesting is that we talked about quarantining the crazy, the hip hop. There are ways in which polite society reinforces negative values toward women but they don't call them b****, ho, skeaze or slut, chicken head, 'hood rat. I am not suggesting that b****, ho, skeaze, 'hood rat and chicken head are not offensive. They are profoundly offensive. What is interesting is that but if we take moral comfort in our heart, we have now isolated the strain of virulent misogyny in hip hop and therefore we have gotten at the root of it, no, we have gotten a powerful manifestation of it that needs to be dealt with. But what we have done at the same time is avoid the way in which sentiments expressed against women are pervasive in the society. This is why I mentioned—and I love the black church. I am an ordained Baptist minister. I feel about the black church the way Robert McAfee Brown said he felt about the church. If it wasn't for the—it is like Noah's ark. If it wasn't for the storm on the outside, you couldn't stand the stink on the inside. So the church is an institution that deals with the funkiness but it has its own kind of funkiness. Now, I am not suggesting that there is a parallel between the virulent, degrading emphasis upon women's bodies in hip hop and what goes on in church but I am saying this: that if you are 75 percent of an institution, that you can do everything but run and your money supports it, you are essentially an ecclesiastical whore or a theological b**** at that level without the explicit expression and articulation. That doesn't justify it. I am not a person who is trying to justify expressions of degradation against women at any level. Having said that, I also know that what Mr. Banner said is interesting in this sense. When you use the word "b****," many women use the word "b****" in and among themselves. Men don't have the same register of access to that word that women do except in hip hop, it does happen. See, there is not parallel. Black men using the "N" word is different than men using the "B" word because now you are dealing with women who are being degraded by your emphasis, and no matter how cool or down you are as a black man, the "B" word means something that is virulent and vicious and problematic, but at the same time, you have men calling each other "b****" so that means that there is some terminological slippage going on there.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I am looking forward——

Mr. DYSON. It is not as simple as it can be.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I am looking forward to hearing from some women on that point.

Mr. DYSON. Oh, absolutely. But I am not—that is what I am saying. I am not defending the vehement denunciation of women at all. I don't in any way concede that. I am simply saying however, that if you ban the "B" word all together, you don't even hear Queen Latifah saying "don't you call me a b**** or a ho" and I am saying that there are women who find that degrading and there are many men who find the "B" word degrading as well, and I think that is what we have to put forth.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I was just asking permission of the chairman if briefly Mr. Miller could respond.

Mr. MILLER. Yes. I just think that we—as people that come from the street, you need to be right or you are wrong, and I just think right now, like I said, I want to apologize to all the women out there, everybody that I did wrong. I was honestly wrong and I accept full responsibility. Back in my days, we used to fight if you said something bad about somebody's mama, and I think my mama is a beautiful black queen. We got to start putting that in our work and stop justifying why is it right or wrong. It is wrong. I am going to do everything I can—and me, I didn't have somebody to pat me on the back and tell me what I can do and what I will do. I am making sure my son would not do—he has never said a cuss word. He never talked bad about a woman. I think if we start growing up and really understanding how to take our game to the next level and take action, not worry about what we did in the past, right now where are we going, and I think most of where we are going right now, the change is coming. It is not going to be quick. It is not going to happen overnight but people are starting to wake up saying you know what, I want something better out of life. When you talk about women, because you either have a mother or a sister or a woman that you are sleeping with that you would have to say you know what, I don't want people talking about them like that, I don't want nobody talking about mine like that, and I don't want myself and I want to grow up and I am starting right now. So I can tell you what I am doing as an individual. I am going to take advantage of that and not be a part of doing that because it definitely talking about somebody's mama, sister or wife. So I am definitely going to do my part and I think we shouldn't call women "B's" and we should grow up. We did it for a while, we didn't know and we learned to understand. We need to grow up, and I think that is the most important thing that we are going to figure out today if we grow up, we are going to be all right.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you.

Mr. RUSH. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Gonzalez, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Miller, I think your last response probably captures what we are really trying to do here. Legislating, it is almost impossible to do anything. I think what the chairman seeks to do in this dialog is to raise the consciousness of the producers, the distributors, the artists to the influence that you have. Now, you are speaking prospectively and into the future. I think Mr. Crump was disagreeing with you because his body language surely was that he did not agree with your statements. So I only can assume that the distributors, the producers, the writers, the artists are probably going

to continue along the same lines. So I just—we all agree on this: you influence people.

Mr. MILLER. Exactly.

Mr. GONZALEZ. All right. And I understand that it is reflecting a condition in America that is unacceptable, but you are presenting it in a vehicle called entertainment.

Mr. MILLER. Yes.

Mr. GONZALEZ. You are trivializing it, and when I say "you" I don't mean you directly. I am talking about a whole industry. I am talking about the artist and so on. You glamorize lifestyles that you here today are saying should be condemned and that young black men should seek and aspire to something else, even though they may not have that opportunity.

Mr. MILLER. Yes.

Mr. GONZALEZ. What I don't see though is that in the lyrics and in the videos, which is another issue, I don't see that suddenly a solution, an answer, a pathway is being described. What you are describing, Mr. Crump, is the present state of affairs without giving hope to a different world or an out. What you do privately I will say, sir, is commendable and admirable but I say what you do publicly is viewed by so many more people, and influence and impact so many more people by your public persona than what you do privately, and I am saying that in good faith to you. I guess what I really want to ask you all is, is this entertainment?

And I want to ask Dr. Dyson, for all the young people that view these videos and listen to this music, is it really going to encourage and lead them to deal with the present situation that needs a discussion and needs solution or is it going to lead them to your classroom which is a much more legitimate forum to have a meaningful debate on this than for us to be legislating. That is the real issue here. We are all over the map on this. We are trying to say that the music and the lyrics reflect a condemnable condition. We all agree on that. My God, I mean, we are not going to go back into history or even Mr. Rush where we all started in the early days and where we are today. Everyone agrees on it. What we are saying is, what are we going to do about this entertainment forum that is promoting an understanding and is perpetuating a present situation that will remain the future because it really does have that kind of influence. And I will start with Mr. Crump.

Mr. CRUMP. Thank you very much. First of all, one of the problems is in most cases you guys don't listen to our music so you don't know what I have actually done. My second single—first of all, my first single was called "Like a Pimp"—rugged, rough, this, that and the other. I had prayed before I actually got on it. I told God, I said, God, if you give me an opportunity to make it out of the 'hood without drugs, without having to go to somebody and get fronted some money, that I will try to change my life. Right after that I got a deal. I did "Like a Pimp." I actually put my career on the line by coming out with a song called "Cadillac on 22." We made a video and I will quote a half of a verse: "God, I know that we pimp. God, I know that we wrong. God, I know I should talk about more in all of my songs. I know these kids are listening. I know I am here for a mission but it so hard to get them when 22 rims are spinning." So in me saying that, I put that video out. Dur-

ing that same album, I had—I gave $50,000 for scholarships. The truth is, I put that music out there. I made the effort. My career went down, down, down. When I went back to the music that put me on-because what you have to understand, people put us on for a certain type of music, and for us to get up once we get rich, that is sort of like treason to America. You call treason to the same people that put you on. What I will say, and this ties in to what she said, it is not about music. If you want to talk about degrading women, I think it causes more of a problem to have a little bitty girl on the sideline with a short skirt jumping up and down cheering for a football player running a football with her being half naked on the sideline has nothing to do with him running the football or beer commercials where women have on bikinis and they are selling beer and walking in McDonald's with her cleavage open to sell a sandwich. Exactly. I think that is a bigger problem. But what I want all of you guys to take home is the fact that people know that young black men don't have anybody to protect them so we will always put the drug problem, the gun problem, the degradation of women on young black men because we don't even protect ourselves, and I would say——

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Crump, let me interrupt you 1 second because my time is going to be up, and I appreciate where you are coming from but what you just said, if people are really listening, is, it is the almighty dollar.

Mr. CRUMP. Well, it——

Mr. GONZALEZ. Now, wait a minute. I think you went to what I think is a more substantive approach, giving young people hope, giving them direction, but what you are saying, your career was tanking and the only way you went up—now, let me tell you that——

Mr. CRUMP. But it is all part—it is all a part of my life.

Mr. GONZALEZ. No——

Mr. CRUMP. This is all part of my life.

Mr. GONZALEZ. That is the problem.

Mr. CRUMP. And what I want you to know is that——

Mr. GONZALEZ. It is you yourself and——

Mr. CRUMP [continuing]. is that I made an effort, but the truth is, when it comes down to it, regardless of what we want to say, if I do not keep myself current, it don't matter how many CDs I put out, how much I stand on the corner and talk about positivity, nobody will hear it. At least with me being put in a position that I am, I am even here and have the ability to take up for my people. If I am not current, it don't matter no way.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Crump——

Mr. GONZALEZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RUSH. Have you completed your questioning?

Mr. GONZALEZ. Well, I wanted the other members—again, I mean, I think what the chairman is attempting to accomplish here, and this is a step in the right direction, but we have everyone simply saying nothing is going to change, and that is the concern, and Mr. Miller and Mr. Dyson——

Mr. MILLER. Well, what I wanted to tell you guys is, like the Congressman said, it is definitely—we can't put a stereotype on a dollar. I mean, that is why I am here today to let us know how im-

portant knowledge is over money. Knowledge is the most important thing that we can focus on, because if you don't have the knowledge, you would never make the money anyway. So my thing is with me, and I feel Mr. Banner's frustration because I sold 75 million records and then as it decreased, people say I wanted to do the right thing. I started doing the right thing. They stopped buying my records at a minimum, but what I said was, I am growing up, I am maturing, I want to do the right thing. It has got to start right now with me. I don't care if they don't buy my records because I am going to keep doing the right thing. I don't care if they don't play my videos. I am going to keep doing it because I understand.

Somebody has to take a stand for what we are about to build and I know we are focusing on what is right now but something has to stop and it has to start right today to say, you know what, we are not focusing on the dollar no more, we are educating, and something is more important than music. We don't need to focus on the music. We have got to teach these kids how to get into other avenues. I am going to challenge the networks and say you know what, we are going to put a financial show and show our kids in these communities and see what happens because I think that is the most important thing. We have to teach them there are other avenues besides music, and when we say we can make other avenues besides music, we can make money financially doing finally literacy shows. Our kids is going to change and say you know what, I don't care if they don't play my music; if I got to do the right thing. I have to make the right context of what he said about Tupac. Think about Tupac's songs. Tupac had a lot of songs what he was going through but he also had the dear mama's, the uplifting songs that really stuck to our community and I think if we put more songs out like that, we are going to be able to change our communities and we have got to teach these kids how to make money besides music. When we do that, the music is going to change. And so I am going to challenge all these networks that came and all these records companies, let us do some financial shows because one thing about athletes and African-Americans, we always lose the first go-round so we have that frustration. Every athlete I know has cash problems the first go-round or some type of financial problems so they are angry and they are waiting for their second contract. We got to stop in the music business waiting for that second contract so we can make some changes. We have got to teach our kids and we got to prepare them and grow them to be financially successful so they don't have to look back and do the same thing they did back in the past, and that is the only thing, Lord bless me, saying that go seek that knowledge, and I want these kids now—I wrote a book—pick up a book. Understand that we start reading and stop just worrying about the music. The music is going to sound better to us because now we have the knowledge.

Mr. DYSON. Can I just briefly respond? Tonight if you look at BET, a two-part series, I challenge the rapper Nelly and TI when Nelly swiped a credit card down the woman's gluteus maximus and I said we don't reduce your career to that, that's true, let us be honest because like Mr. Banner, he is a philanthropist but I said

to me, when I saw the crass commercialization of the woman's body relating back to slavery where they were sold on auction blocks, and as a result hip hop has simply updated the stereotype that is deeply entrenched in the American collective unconscious. And TI said—the other rapper said it is really that deep. I said yes, you are a rapper, you do the lyrics. I am an intellectual, I do the analysis. We both can come together. So I don't justify the visual injustice to which black women in particular are subject in terms of—and I think the images are even worse so called in terms of an influence than the lyrics themselves because now you are getting past the conscious mind and the images themselves create a universe of expectations and the like but at the same time I think that we have to be much more complex. Again, to scapegoat one segment of the society without looking at how we all participate would be wrong.

Mr. RUSH. Thank you. The gentleman from New York is recognized.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Chairman, I am just going to ask one question and then I have to leave. The question is, do you think it is possible to be a positive role model and express yourself with explicit lyrics at the same time? Just go right down the line. Go ahead.

Mr. MILLER. Well, I always said to myself that I come from the streets and I was able to educate myself and clean my life up. I always say to myself—and that is just me—I said I could be an inspiration and I could teach my son to be a role model. And I think we can't point the finger at hip hop and we can't point the finger at David Banner and me. We are all speaking the same thing. We have to grow to a certain level. Right now without David Banner being where he is at, because I was there one day, I couldn't get to where I am right now. I just think that we got to stop stereotyping the whole community because we got to put some balance out there right now. That is the only reason I am here. I understand where he is at. He understands where I am at. What I am here to put balance and say that we can do some right and move on and still be successful. But I just think that yes, maybe I can be a role model and I come from the streets and I come from that type of music and I said I am sorry but what I am going to do, I am going to make my kids be role models. My son is not going to do that type of music because I understand that we are destroying our community. I understand that. That is me. Until everybody gets to that level and see that, maybe we don't understand. I went to 12 funerals so I know, I seen my cousin. It is a lack of education. It ain't the music. Everybody is a cycle that I am trying to break and if I can break that cycle to show kids put some balance out there, we are going to get to where we need to go at. And none of it is wrong. We all have the freedom of speech, and I want people out there to know, if you make any type of music, if you get to—it is like the guy on the street. You say man, I am out here hustling but if I live tomorrow, I want to try to get into something else to better myself and that is the message I want to give to our kids, what about tomorrow. What are we going to do if we survive? And we put the tattoos all over our neck. We can't go into corporate America. We got to understand, it might be tomorrow and that is when I woke up with having a child. I have a son. I want to be

there for him. I want to be there for my kids. I want to be there for my family and I don't want to be incarcerated, I don't want to be dead. So the kids out there need to get that message too. They have parental advisory stickers on the records that are parental advisory but I just think if we put a balance and make it work, we will be able to get to where we need to be at.

Mr. CRUMP. It is amazing to me that Ludicris can lose his Pepsi deal and they go and get the Osbornes and that is OK. The truth is, it is only music. Yes, it has an effect on children. Yes, it can influence some people who have that deficit in their personality in the first place. I had—the black caucus gave me an award for my philanthropy and there was a big uprising in Mississippi and it was strange to me because I told some of the city officials in Mississippi, I said me being a so-called gangsta rapper has nothing to do with the fact that I gave away millions of dollars. This is not against the law for me to speak my mind. So why is it that when young black men do something and Martin Scorcese can make movies that talk about b****** and n****** and it is fine and he can be a role model. The Osbornes can do the same thing that Ludicris can do but he get his Pepsi deal taken away. Same thing with Don Imus. We are here in front of Congress but regardless, Don Imus got that $1 million contract to go on to his next business deal. The truth is, we have been demonized since day 1. Of course I can be a role model. Look at Ice Cube. He is one of the most powerful guys in the music industry. What if we were to stop him in the NWA days? We wouldn't have given him the responsibility to grow. It is the process that makes us men. Yes, there may be some things that we are not doing right but Snoop Dogg says the most powerful thing: I wonder why people want to get us in front of Congress and talk to us, get in front of the TV and talk to us. Why aren't they men and women enough to pull us to the side and say maybe you didn't know no better, maybe your mother was on crack, maybe you only saw your mother being disrespected and his mother disrespected that mother and it went on and it went on. Nobody comes to us and talks to us. I talk to Nelly and that video that you are talking about, I produced the song to, and regardless of—yes, like Nelly says, that was an adult video for adult people and it is just like everything that we do is always our fault. It is only music.

Mr. DYSON. I think that, to be very brief, LBJ cussed like a sailor. Richard Nixon, they got the tapes, him cussing like a man going out of style. They are still presidents of the United States. So yes, to be quite simplistic, obviously he can be a role model. Look at Richard Pryor who used cursing in a very creative and interesting fashion and yet who spoke about some of the most powerful social problems that prevailed in American culture. Here is what we have to come to grips with. To be positive is not itself a virtue if it is not accompanied by serious, powerful art that forces us to reflect upon our society. All art should not make you feel good.

Some art should get in your face. Some art should be irreverent. The point and purpose of art is not simply to make you feel warm and fuzzy. Some art ought to make you change your bigoted ways. Maybe you are a sexist. Some art can make you think about it. Maybe you are a racist. Some art can make you think about it. Some art then perpetuates the very legacy that it claims to want

to resist. Should we be critical of it? Absolutely right. But I think if we are looking for either or, black or white answers, that is not it. I think that yes, as Kanye West, look at Kanye West who beat 50 Cent in this recent scrimmage for hip hop supremacy. That is a mark of the maturity and the evolution of hip hop whereas 50 Cent "I don't know what you heard about me but you can't get a dollar out of me" was rejected in favor of a guy singing about Jesus, but even in a song singing about Jesus, right after that says "If this manager keeps insulting me, I will be insulting him and after I mess the manager up, I am going to shorten the cash register up." Even after he is singing "One glad morning, when this life is over, I will fly away."

That is the convergence of complex that manifests our conflicted lives and I think that hip hop at its best, again, both reflects the pathology that needs to be rooted out and provides an answer through a scalpel of rhetoric to be able to dig into the body of the problem and seek what the reality is, and I think at its best it does that, and I think that yes, you can be a positive, uplifting figure and not say anything and you can be a so-called degraded figure who is not positive and say something profound and intelligent, and I think that what we have to do is to push forward self-criticism. Misogyny, sexism, homophobia, racism and the like need to be dealt with, articulated and wrestled with regardless of what color they come in, regardless of what body they come in. But at the same time, as Mr. Banner is suggesting, we must not somehow quarantine the problem to young black people who when they manifest the pathology are seen as its origins. They are certainly at the worst seen as its continuation.

Mr. TOWNS. Let me thank all of you for your comments, and let me thank you, Mr. Chairman, and of course, I really feel that this discussion has been a very good one, and Mr. Chairman, I look forward to continuing to work with you in this regard.

Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. RUSH. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

Mr. Crump, there is a lot of sickness in American society. This Congress has a lot of work to do. Washington, DC, has a lot of work to do. We have No Child Left Behind but the money isn't there. We are debating right now making sure that all children get healthcare but the President is saying he will veto that legislation. We have a lot of work to do in our country, and here in Washington, in order to make sure that every child in America is given the opportunity they need, education, healthcare, protection in the community, there is no debate over that. And I am a liberal Democrat from Massachusetts so on those things, that is what I come here to do every day, and we are fighting to make that possible, and the work that you do for Katrina and books, that is great. It really is. I guess the question I would ask you is, how can you work to have a positive message? Because they have to hear a positive message from Congress. There are people here fighting to get that positive message out too. We are not successful in the short run and we have to continue to fight. What can you do? What you do in Katrina unfortunately, what you do and some of these other things, kids in America don't hear about that. They should but they

don't. All they hear is your music. So what can you do working with those of us here who are trying to get out a positive message, to try to put positive programs out, what can you do in your music to get out the positive message, to accent that? What can you do?

Mr. CRUMP. I actually call my music a Bible with a Playboy cover on it, and the one thing that I disagree with you about is, kids know what I do because I make sure that I get on BET, I make sure that I get on MTV, and as a matter of fact, one of the reasons why my last album probably didn't reach the place that it was supposed to reach even though I had one of the biggest singles in the world is because I didn't spend time promoting my album. I spent time promoting what was going on in Mississippi and the fact that people in Mississippi were being ignored. I think what happened, as a matter of fact, and I think if you talk to people in the crowd, people look at me as more of an activist than they do as a rapper and it sort of hurts my pocket but that is fine.

Mr. MARKEY. Do you think that your music is consistent with or undermining of the message you are sending——

Mr. CRUMP. Well, actually my music——

Mr. MARKEY. Is the music that you put out there consistent with or undermining of the message you are sending on Katrina?

Mr. CRUMP. My message is very consistent. Actually, like I said, I call my music a Bible with a Playboy cover. I start here and I end in a different place, and what I will say real quick, I think part of the problem I see in Congress right here today. I look at the fact that we are debating about something that is so very important in our society but our parents are gone. I am looking at the seats. Our parents are gone. And as more questions are being asked as important as people say that this is, our parents are gone. So we are left here again. Probably by the end of this day there is probably going to be more of us than it will be of you guys. So once again we are here to fend for ourselves again.

Mr. MARKEY. Let me say this to you. Every time one of your video plays, there is not a video playing of your work in Katrina. There is not a video playing of this other message. All there is that one video and that is what the young people in America see. What can you do in your videos, in your music that helps to propel this more positive message out there at the same time, this Katrina message? What can you do?

Mr. CRUMP. It is funny that you say that because people always say that my videos are confusing because I always try to put something in my videos that I should probably spend more time being focused on the music at hand. What I will say is——

Mr. MARKEY. Can you——

Mr. CRUMP. Can I ask you a question?

Mr. MARKEY. Can you do more?

Mr. CRUMP. Yes, I can do more.

Mr. MARKEY. Let me ask you, will you do more?

Mr. CRUMP. No, I am doing more. I think it is better for me to become as big as 50 Cent so instead of asking the Red Cross to do our 'hoods right and which the Red Cross did not do our 'hoods right, I can do it myself with the finances that I have made, and what I will say, I am—and I have to admit this. After I talked it over with the preachers, I am like Stephen King. I do better at hor-

ror music. Horror music is what I do, and you don't ask Will Smith to do the same—well, why are you acting, Will Smith? Can you please make sure that you put some kind of message in your movie while you are acting and you are being a killer? We are musicians.

Mr. MARKEY. Look, we here in Washington have work to do. I come to work every single day trying to do better for the people that you are sending your message to. My question to you is, are you willing to try to do better in communicating a message that is more positive?

Mr. CRUMP. What I will say, I am willing to work harder to change the conditions in which I come out of so maybe I won't have to talk about it. Maybe if we spent more time in New Orleans, and being the fact that Mississippi is the most impoverished State in the Union, maybe if my conditions change I would have different things to talk about.

Mr. MARKEY. Can you get better?

Mr. CRUMP. I mean, I can get better if the situations get better. Can we make the situations better? I am only speaking about what I see in my neighborhood.

Mr. MARKEY. Well——

Mr. CRUMP. Change the situation in my neighborhood and maybe I would have something——

Mr. MARKEY. Are you working to——

Mr. CRUMP. And I am not being combative. It is just painful to me that we go through situations as African-Americans and it is like we—first of all, we were brung here as slaves who were thrown in situations and now we are talking about the stuff that we see and it is like—it is a big problem. Everything that—there is nothing that you can look at in my music and say that it doesn't exist in my community. That is all I am asking is let us really address the real problem because the truth is, everyone will point a finger from that perspective. We can probably trace something back to each and every family that helped affect the music that I am talking about.

Mr. MARKEY. Children don't always see it every day the way that you do, and the question that you have and that I think we all have to do and Washington has a responsibility is to create a sense that there is hope, that there is a real to believe, that you can be optimistic, that it doesn't all have to be negative, and that is all I am asking you to do is to try to in your message, in your power to communicate that sense of optimism and that there are people who are working to make things better. Because you are looking at people here who work every single day to do it, from our chairman through most of the Members here. Now, we are not always successful because there is a White House there but we need through you, through your incredible power, because children don't hear the rest of this, for you to play a role too.

Mr. CRUMP. And I will ask you to do more research on me and you will see that I am doing it and instead of listening to the curse words, just listen to the fact that we are asking for help.

Mr. RUSH. We want to thank you very much. We are going to conclude this line of questioning and we are going to have to conclude this testimony because we do have another panel that has

been just so patient. They have been here most of the day. Mr. Miller——

Mr. MILLER. Yes, I just want to elaborate on that. I think what we have to get back to, I think where Mr. Banner is right now where I understand what exactly is going on right now. We have to understand that he has to realize what he is doing is personal like in his views and what he does when he is in the media. I see what the Congressman is saying. What exactly we do in the media, it will affect the lives of other people so we got to think about it, and that is why I say, education and knowledge is two different things. I mean, we could be educated but when we get the knowledge and understand that, we will really be able to take our game to the next level, and that is what I going to do. The kids out there right now really need somebody to focus on the knowledge and what we can do to make those changes because we do need that balance. But also there is the media. We have to stop glorifying the negative stuff and glorifying more positive things. Let us glorify the positive people in hip hop and the kids are going to want to change.

But if we constantly keep glorifying the negative stuff—and also we are in a panic mode right now. I want to leave you all with this, that we are in a panic. I have to figure out how to take my game to the next level because I want to help take David and everybody else around me, to take us out of that panic mode because all we got right now is just the way we eat, just the way we feed our kids. I want to take hip hop to Wall Street to understand how to put a balance so we don't have to depend—and we really can say, understand that whatever we want but knowing that it affects somebody and when we get to that level of the game, and understand we are not talking about building a union and start building benefits for hip hop, then we can control what these kids are saying. I want to give these kids some type of—I want to be like the commissioner, like the NBA has.

Let us build a league for hip hop so now we could give benefits, child care, make sure—because these kids are great. They come from a great situation but we are not going to do that because these guys are not going to sacrifice their paychecks and their jobs right now unless we build some type of financial literacy where they know that we change and it is not just about the music. It is about something bigger. It is about our kids. It is about them not being the way we are, and that is what I am going to take—I will take full responsibility right now for hip hop saying that I am a big part of the problem. I say that I am the father of this. I sold 75 million records and I wish I had somebody to wake me up in my prime to where now I could get to one of these kids like Kanye West saying people are watching what you do. If you could take your game to the next level, you just took out 50 Cent and showed that you could be something bigger. Now if you think about what you sell this next record or the next person that becomes powerful with a big record like Chamillionaire already started to clean his lyrics up and I am not saying change the content of the freedom of speech, I am just saying take out the negative stuff that they won't play on the radio or TV anyway and we can get some of these endorsement deals, we can get our product into, we can be a part of the diversity programs. If you look at like Wal-Mart, Tar-

get, these people got diversity that we are not involved in because we are stereotyped by the music. So it got to start today and I will be a part of that mission. I will be out there fighting and I will be out there making sure that we think about what we say and I can help some of my colleagues around me and stay behind the scenes. We have to get—like David said, we have to get what we need behind the scenes and talk about it and—when those guys left, the first panel, they was communicating. We are at each other's throats and we don't need to be there anymore because we are empowering these communities right now.

Mr. RUSH. Thank you very much. We thank this panel. We thank you so much for your time and for your testimony. You have really done the entire Nation quite an excellent service. You really provided some insight into your art form and insight into your business. We thank you so very much. And now we will ask the next panel to be please be seated. Thank you so very much.

There is a vote that is going on on the floor. There are three votes, at least three votes, so we will recess until the vote is completed and then we will return, but I am going to introduce the panel and possibly get to at least one opening statement before we have to recess.

Our first panelist on the third panel is Tracy Danine Sharpley-Whiting. She is a Ph.D. professor at Vanderbilt University. Professor Sharpley-Whiting is the author of a book entitled "Pimps Up, Hos Down: Hip Hop's Hold on Young Black Women," and she is a leading academic on, among other things, feminists and critical race theory.

Our next panelist is Mr. Andrew Rojecki, who is also a Ph.D. and associate professor at the University of Illinois-Chicago. Professor Rojecki is the co-author of the book "The Black Image and the White Mind" and has researched how media portrayals of African-Americans reinforce stereotypes in the minds of white Americans.

Faye Williams, also a Ph.D., is the chair of the National Congress of Black Women. Dr. Williams is a valiant fighter, always on the front lines, a remarkable woman. She continues the legacy of the former NCBW chairwoman, the late Hon. Shirley Chisholm, and the late Hon. C. Delores Tucker. She has targeted misogyny in hip hop music as an area of much needed reform.

Lisa Fager is the president of Industry Ears. Ms. Fager is a leading watchdog of commercial hip hop and has long sought to reform hip hop and return it to its artistic roots as an empowering art form for young people.

And our last witness is Ms. Karin Dill, also a Ph.D. She is a professor at Lenoir-Rhyne College. Professor Dill is a psychologist who specializes in gender stereotypes and misogyny as perpetrated and reinforced by the popular media.

Again, in the interest of time, I am going to ask our first witness, Dr. Whiting, would you please take 5 minutes for a an opening statement?

STATEMENT OF TRACY SHARPLEY-WHITING, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY, NASHVILLE, TN

Ms. SHARPLEY-WHITING. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Stearns and other members of the subcommittee, thank you for in-

viting me here today to provide testimony on this very important topic. It is a privilege to testify before the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection.

Today, demeaning, degrading and objectifying black women are undeniably profitable pastimes from the cross-dressing male a la comedian Eddie Murphy's recent turn in the $50 million-generating Hollywood vehicle "Norbit," to the Don Imus "nappy-headed hos" kerfuffle, to Rush Limbaugh's referring to the accuser in the Duke lacrosse rape case as a "ho," to the "we don't love them hos" of much of commercial hip hop, a culture of disrespect, with black women on the receiving end, packaged as entertainment permeates American popular culture.

There are iPod commercials that allude to strip club culture featuring an abundantly rumped black woman holding onto a pole on a public bus. And then there is the Quentin Tarantino ode to alpha females in the second film of the double feature "Grindhouse" where the lone black female character is the only one to utter ad nauseum an expletive that describes a female dog. Indeed, such antics have risen to the level of art, whereby entertainers believe they should receive a "free pass" because they are merely performing their craft, whether it be crude, curmudgeonly shock jocks or grill-wearing pimped-out rap artists.

Although most Americans associate this culture of disrespect with hip hop culture, ironically such characterizations find their roots in our Nation's beginnings. In 1781, a mere 5 years after penning that hallowed document of the new Nation, the Declaration of Independence, which prized freedom while sanctioning perpetual bondage, our Founding Father Thomas Jefferson put his sights on writing on his beloved State of Virginia. In between pages on flora and fauna in "Notes on the State of Virginia," Jefferson delivered a prophesy about race-based slavery in the United States. Of slavery, he would write

> It is a great political and moral evil

and that he

> trembled for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever . . . Deep-rooted prejudices entertained by whites, 10,000 recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained will . . . divide us into parties . . . end[ing] in the extermination of one or the other races.

Of blacks in general, he concluded that, and I quote

> Whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstance, [they] are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind.

And of black women, he suggested that they were more "ardent" and preferred "uniformly" by the male "Oranootan" over females of "his own species." There were no orangutans to be found in Virginia to substantiate such an observation. This fact was of little consequence to Thomas Jefferson.

A deeply complicated and conflicted man, Jefferson, as is widely acknowledged, had a prolonged intimate relationship with the young slave girl, Sally Hemmings. With "Notes on the State of Virginia," our Nation's third president sealed an odious radical-sexual contract within our national fabric regarding black women. Jefferson's paradox has had an enduring legacy in the United States. Against this unequivocal founding doctrine, black women have con-

tinuously been struggling both in the courts of law and public opinion, in our very own communities, and as of late, on American's airwaves.

From slave narratives like Harriet Jacobs' "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl" to post-emancipation writings such as Anna Julia Cooper's "A Voice from the South, by a Woman from the South," black women have been steadfast in decrying attacks on their character and morality. When after the president of the Missouri Press Association wrote an open letter addressed to an English woman attempting to cast aspersions on the credibility of anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells, he made plain that black women had "no sense of virtue" and "character". In response, the black women's club movement organized in July 1895 to defend their name.

Despite our strides in every area of American life, nearly 2 million college-educated black women out-earning their white and Latina counterparts, 1 in 4 of us occupies managerial or professional positions, the profits to be had at our expense are far greater than the cost of caricaturing our personhood.

Our own complicity in our objectification requires some scrutiny as well. Consumer culture seduces many of us into selling ourselves short in the marketplace of ideas and desires. The range of our successes and the diversity of our lives and career paths have been congealed in the mainstream media into video vixens, thanks to Karrine Steffans' best-selling "Confessions of a Video Vixen" or shake dance's given the frenzy surrounding the Duke rape case and hip hop culture's collaboration with the multibillion-dollar adult entertainment industry.

That sexism and misogyny appear to be working overtime in America to box us into these very narrow depictions of black womanhood are part and parcel of the Jeffersonian contract. Hip hop culture certainly is certainly waist-deep in the muck of this race-gender chauvinism. Male feelings of displacement in a perceived topsy-turvy female-dominated world, increased competition for women and girls in every facet of American life contribute to black male on black female gender drive-bys, and black women's seeming resiliency, despite America's continuing race and gender biases, our strengths are flung back at us and condensed into cliches such as the late New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's "emasculating superwomen," or better still, that "B" word.

Though America drinks to the bursting from that Jeffersonian well, it is imperative that women become politically and socially conscious about the choices we make and the opportunities we take. As a writer and scholar and member of the so-called "hip hop generation," I find aspects of American popular culture with its global reach and entrepreneurial and innovative spirit deeply gratifying and simultaneously painfully disturbing. For what has become abundantly clear that it is not so much that we women don't count; we do in obviously various insidious ways. But we also don't add up to much, certainly not more than the profits, in the billions, to be had at our expense.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to testify before this subcommittee today, and I look forward to answering any questions you and others may have of me.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Sharpley-Whiting follows:]

Congressional Testimony
Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection of the
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Tuesday, September 25, 2007
"From Imus to Industry: The Business of Stereotypes and Degrading Images"

Dr. Tracy D. Sharpley-Whiting, Ph.D.
Vanderbilt University
Professor of French and African American and Diaspora Studies
Director of African American and Diaspora Studies
Director of the W. T. Bandy Center for Baudelaire and Modern French Studies

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should receive a 'free pass' because they are merely performing their craft—whether it be crude, curmudgeonly shock jocks, or grill-wearing, pimped out rap artists.

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That sexism and misogyny appear to be working overtime in America to box us into these very narrow depictions of Black womanhood are part and parcel of the Jeffersonian contract. Hip hop culture is certainly waist deep in the muck of this race-gender chauvinism. Male feelings of displacement in a perceived topsy-turvy female- dominated world, increased

competition from women and girls in every facet of American life contribute to Black-male-on-Black-female-gender drive bys. And Black women's seeming resiliency, despite America's continuing race and gender biases, our strengths, are flung back at us and condensed into clichés such as the late New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's "emasculating superwomen," or better still—that 'b-word."

Though America drinks to the bursting from that Jeffersonian well, it is imperative that women become more politically and socially conscious about the choices we make and the opportunities we take. As a writer and scholar and member of the so-called 'hip hop generation," I find aspects of American popular culture with its global reach and entrepreneurial and innovative spirit deeply gratifying and simultaneously painfully disturbing. For it has become abundantly clear that it is not so much that we women don't count. We do—in obviously various insidious ways. But we also don't add up too much—certainly not more than the profits, in the billions, to be had at our expense.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to testify before this Subcommittee today and I look forward to answering any questions you or others may have.

Mr. RUSH. We want to thank you. We have to recess to go to vote so we will recess until the conclusion of the last vote and then we will come back. I want to thank you so much.

[Recess.]

Mr. RUSH. We will ask our second panelists to give us 5 minutes of opening statements. Dr. Rojecki, am I pronouncing that right?

Mr. ROJECKI. Yes.

Mr. RUSH. Please, 5 minutes, if you will. You have 5 minutes for opening statements.

STATEMENT OF ANDREW ROJECKI, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-CHICAGO, CHICAGO, IL

Mr. ROJECKI. On behalf of my students and the faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago, I would like to thank the Chair and the panel for inviting my testimony.

The Don Imus affair is the most recent example of a pattern in how Americans think about race. The civil rights movement of the 1960s not only changed the legal framework for race issues, it also changed the way Americans spoke in public about race. In terms of the social sciences, the norms had changed. It became socially unacceptable for white Americans to give voice to black stereotypes in anger or in jest. By the early 1990s, the term "political correctness" had been coined to make fun of an exaggerated sensitivity to personal feelings attached to group membership. The concept of political correctness is less important for naming a hypocritical repression of speech than for identifying an incomplete transformation. Specifically, the change in public norms has not been accompanied by a change in private attitudes. Political correctness could not exist absent the tension between what is expected and what is believed or felt. For example, large majorities of whites say that blacks should have equal opportunity, but major American cities remain highly segregated. Black children continue to get inferior education and medical care and black unemployment remains twice as high as white. How do whites explain these differences? In the early 1940s, surveys found that majorities of whites explained lower black achievement as evidence of intellectual inferiority. Today only a small minority claim that as true. The shift in perception from innate biological differences to social injustice fueled the civil rights movement. Unfortunately, it also gave whites license to discount discrimination as an explanation for the continuing difference between black and white success.

Majorities of whites now believe that the lesser position of African-Americans is due to moral failing or flaws in black culture itself. In our own research on the black image in the white mind, whites we interviewed spontaneously referred to media images of sexuality and violence that supported their negative views. These images substituted for the absence of sustained contact between whites and blacks, inevitable in a society that remains segregated. This is especially true among those persons whom we call the ambivalent majority, those whites who are sympathetic to aspirations of black Americans but who are influenced by images that highlight irresponsibility and violence. In short, majorities of white Americans have good intentions but not the subtle inner convictions to put their ideals into practice, perhaps because the forms

of discrimination routinely experienced by African-Americans have become less visible.

Social psychologists who study social cognition, how people see and process the social world, explain this ambivalence by invoking the premise that we need simplified mental representations, they call them schemata, to deal with reality. Schemata are simple mental shortcuts that let us economize on brain power. They also distort our perceptions. So powerful are these mental pictures that they may be activated without conscious control or awareness, a phenomenon reported by research in broad range of contexts. For example, whites take less time to associate traits such as intelligence and kindness for a white face than for a black face because those traits are consistent with their mental representations of whites. These experimental results have important real-world implications.

In one study, researchers sent resumes, identical resumes except for stereotypically white or black names, to employers in Chicago and Boston and found that Greg and Emily were 50 percent more likely to get call-blacks than Jamal and Lakisha. In another experiment, an identical test was given to black and white college students. In one condition students were told the test would assess intelligence and the other students were told the test would measure a problem-solving task. Blacks and whites performed identically in the latter condition but blacks did more poorly when they were told the test measured intelligence. In other words, blacks may unconsciously hold the same stereotypes as whites and behave accordingly. More alarmingly, experimental research shows that police officers both white and black are more likely to shoot at black suspects than at white suspects.

There is a way out of the unconscious attitude bind: consciously resist the stereotype. Research across a range of disciplines converges on the same result: lessen the power of the stereotype by bringing it out of the unconscious dark and into the conscious light. Thus, the Willie Horton ad lost much of its effectiveness when Jesse Jackson made a public issue of its malicious intent. Social psychologists find that whites who harbor unconscious stereotypes are able to overcome their influence when they are made aware of them and they have sufficient time to process those mental images. Thus, medical researchers who do brain scan imaging find that the centers of the limbic system, what we call the lizard brain, are stimulated even among unprejudiced whites when the stimulus is brief, 30 milliseconds of a black face. Lengthen the stimulus to half a second and the power of that stereotype is resisted by the conscious prefrontal cortex. This explains in part why police officers who have little time to react are more likely to be influenced by unconscious attitudes.

On the issue of hip hop music, we know that Don Imus did not coin the phrase he used to describe the Rutgers women's basketball team. It is also clear that he would have not used that phrase had he thought about it for a second or two. That image was planted in his mind through a complex sequence of events that began in a culture of poverty that thrives in the black ghettoes of America. Hip hop is a musical expression of a segment of African-Americans who grew up under conditions of privation. The daily lives of Afri-

can-Americans have inspired a range of musical innovation and artistic expression: jazz, the blues. Sadness and tragedy are common to the human condition, but in the United States they have been disproportionately experienced by African-Americans who develop musical forms to give artistic expressions to their life experience.

The music industry is always on the hunt for innovative forms of music that may be marketed and sold to the largest audiences. Hip hop has for over 25 years been an immensely popular genre of music. Its largest audience is white. Marketing to that audience follows the path of least resistance. Sensational images of sex and violence are easier to package and promote than more thoughtful and critical messages, thus gangster rap has endured much more commercial success than the more politically oriented conscious rap. DJs use a mix of hip hop to manage the mood of a club but gangster rap is catnip to an audience more interested in sexual release than raising political consciousness.

So therein lie the incentives to artists, promoters, industry executives and white consumers. The music industry offers one of the few paths out of poverty available to African-Americans. Sex and violence offer proven paths to commercial success and black experience continues to provide vicarious thrills for white audiences. Today's suburban adolescents will in time move to influential positions within corporate America. The question this panel needs to address is whether the stream of imagery and language in gangster rap is more likely to get Lakisha and Jamal a call-back. If the answer is no, how can a system of incentives be changed to make that more likely. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rojecki follows:]

STATEMENT OF ANDREW ROJECKI

The Don Imus affair is the most recent example of a pattern in the way Americans think about race. The Civil Rights movement of the 1960's not only changed the legal framework for issues of race, it also changed the way Americans spoke in public about race. In the terms of the social sciences, the norms had changed. It became socially unacceptable for white Americans to give voice to black stereotypes in anger or even in jest. By the early 1990's the term political correctness (PC) had been coined to make fun of an exaggerated sensitivity to personal feelings attached to group identity.

The concept of political correctness is less important for naming a hypocritical repression of speech than for identifying an incomplete transformation. Specifically, a change in public norms has not been accompanied by a change in private attitudes. Political correctness could not exist absent the tensions between what is expected and what is believed or felt. For example large majorities of whites say that blacks should have equal opportunity, but major American cities remain highly segregated (the ten largest at 75 percent), black children continue to get inferior education and medical care, and black unemployment remains twice as high as white.

How do whites explain these differences? In the early 1940's surveys found that majorities of white Americans explained lower black achievement as evidence of intellectual inferiority (Kinder & Sanders, 1996). Today, only a small minority claim that is true (Schuman et al., 1997). The shift in perception from innate, biological differences to social injustice fueled the success of the Civil Rights movement. Unfortunately, it also gave whites license to discount discrimination as an explanation for the difference between black and white achievement.

Majorities of whites now believe that the lesser position of African Americans is due to individual moral failing or flaws in black culture itself (Sears & Henry, 2005). In our own research on the black image in the white mind (Entman & Rojecki, 2000), whites we interviewed spontaneously referred to media images of sexuality and violence that supported their negative views. These images substituted for the absence of sustained contact between whites and blacks, inevitable

in a society that remains segregated by race (Massey & Denton, 1993; Mumford Center, 2001). This is especially true among those persons whom we call the ambivalent majority, those whites who are sympathetic to aspirations of black Americans but who are influenced by images that highlight irresponsibility and violence. In short, majorities of white Americans have good intentions but not the settled inner convictions to put their ideals into practice, perhaps because the forms of discrimination routinely experienced by African Americans have become less visible (e.g. Feagin, 1991; Myers & Passion Williamson, 2001).

Social psychologists who study social cognition—how people see and process the social world—explain this ambivalence by invoking the premise that we need simplified mental representations (schemata) to deal with the social world. Schemata are mental shortcuts that allow us to economize on expenditures of brain power. They also distort our perceptions. So powerful are these mental pictures that they may be activated without the person's conscious control or awareness, a phenomenon widely reported by research in a broad range of contexts.

For example, whites take less time to associate traits such as intelligence and kindness for a white face than for a black face because those traits are consistent with their mental representations of whites (see Gaertner & McLaughlin, 1983 for the pioneering study; see also https//implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/). These experimental results have important real world implications. In one study (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004) researchers sent resumes, identical except for stereotypically white or black names to employers and found that the Greg or Emily were 50 percent more likely to get callbacks than Jamal or Lakisha. In another, experimenters gave an identical test to black and white college students. In one condition students were told the tests would assess intelligence; in the other students were told the tests would measure a lab problem-solving task. Blacks performed identically in the latter condition but did more poorly when they were told the test measured intelligence (Steele, 1997). In other words, blacks may unconsciously hold same stereotypes as whites and behave accordingly. More alarmingly, experimental research shows that police officers, both white and black, are more likely to shoot at black suspects than white suspects (Correll, et al., 2002).

There is a way out of the implicit attitude bind: consciously resisting the stereotype. Research across a range of disciplines converges on the same result: lessen the power of the stereotype by bringing it out of the unconscious dark into the conscious light. Thus the Willie Horton ad lost its effectiveness when Jesse Jackson made a public issue of its malicious intent (Mendelberg, 2001). Social psychologists find that whites who harbor unconscious stereotypes are able to overcome their influence when they are made aware of them and they have sufficient time to process those mental images. Medical researchers who do brain scan imaging find that the fear centers of the limbic system (sometimes referred to as the lizard brain) are stimulated even among unprejudiced whites when the stimulus is brief—30 milliseconds of a black face (Cunningham et al., 2004). Lengthen the stimulus to half a second and the power of the stereotype is resisted by the conscious prefrontal cortex. This explains in part why police officers who have little time to react are more likely to be influenced by unconscious attitudes.

On the issue of hip-hop music, we know that Don Imus did not coin the phrase he used to describe the Rutgers women's basketball team. It is also clear that he would not have used that phrase had he thought about it for a second or two. That image was planted in his mind through a complex sequence of events that began in a culture of poverty that thrives in the black ghettos of America. Hip-hop is a musical expression of a segment of lived experience that resonates with a significant number of African Americans who grew up under conditions of privation. The lived experiences of African-American life have inspired a range of musical innovation and artistic expression, as in jazz and the blues. Sadness and tragedy are common to the human condition, but in the United States they have been disproportionately experienced by African Americans who have developed musical forms to give artistic expression to their lived experience.

The music industry is always on the hunt for innovative forms of music that may be marketed and sold to the largest audiences. Hip-hop has for over twenty-five years been an immensely popular genre of music, and its largest audience is white. Marketing to that audience follows the path of least resistance: sensational images of sex and violence are easier to package and promote than more thoughtful and critical messages. Thus gangster rap has enjoyed much more commercial success than the more politically oriented conscious rap. DJs use a mix of hip-hop to manage the mood of a club, but gangster rap is catnip to an audience more interested in sexual release than raising political consciousness.

Therein lie the incentives to artists, promoters, industry executives, and white consumers. The music industry offers one of the few paths out of poverty available

to African Americans, sex and violence offer proven paths to commercial success, and black experience continues to provide vicarious thrills for white audiences. Today's suburban adolescents will in time move to influential positions within corporate America. The question this panel needs to address is whether the stream of imagery and language in gangster rap is more or less likely to get Lakisha and Jamal a callback. And if the answer is no, how can the system of incentives be changed to make that more likely.

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Mr. RUSH. Professor Williams.

STATEMENT OF FAYE WILLIAMS, NATIONAL CHAIR, NATIONAL CONGRESS OF BLACK WOMEN, INC., WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. WILLIAMS. Chairman Rush, on behalf of the Women's Coalition on Dignity and Diversity representing more than 11 million women and their families, we thank you for holding this hearing. Even though many of the Members of Congress could not be here, many of the cameras have left, many people have left, we women have heard that someone said we will get over this and they will just outwait us, they don't know us because we are still here, we are still standing.

Our coalition is made up of a diverse group of women who come from the National Council of Women's Organizations, National Council of Negro Women, the Women of Rainbow PUSH, the Women of National Action Network, National Organization for Women, Feminist Majority, YWCA, the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, the National Congress of Black Women, women from labor, women in sports, women from religion, women from

business and all walks of life, and I just want to say that this is not about hip hop. It is not about just rap or us. We are here because we are putting everybody on notice that women are tired of the images of ourselves that we see out there. Some of us educate ourselves. You will notice at this table, everybody's name carries with it "doctor" and we work very hard for the young people in our community and we are tired of being denigrated in our society.

Mr. Chairman, we women, especially black women and our children, have been bombarded with misogyny, violence and obscenities day after day. In a society that claims that it is fair and seeks justice for all, too many corporate leaders have captured the rawness of the feelings of many black males and a few black females who feel disenfranchised. Some rap and hip hop music which began with a positive purpose now taps into the psyche of black teens who have a sense that no one cares that the young black males are routinely getting the short end of the stick in America. They look at what is happening in Katrina still, what is happening to the Jena 6 in my home State of Louisiana, and they have reason to believe that they should be angry with everybody including you and me, Mr. Chairman.

Instead of putting adequate funds into the education and care of young people and the assurance of jobs and the chance to build their own businesses, our system has failed them by steadily diverting funds into war and destruction. We have not always provided the kinds of options that would prevent our young people from idolizing the lives of thugs and pimps and warlords and negative images. Too many of us have criticized young people for denigrating and disrespecting women and black people in order to make a living when they are offered no decent option. We have allowed greed to lead many of our young people to believe that it is OK to entertain themselves by destroying the culture of a people. We know all too well what happened to our Native American brothers and sisters in movies through the years. The obscenities we see and here today have become commonplace to the point that it is being genocidal. Even our babies have been subjected to horrifying language and images on public airwaves by those who should know better but are claiming that this is the only way to relate to our children. If you haven't seen the so-called public service advertisement that looks just like any other cartoon called "Read a Book" you need to see it to understand what we are talking about and why we are still standing. What are teachers to do when they hear the children repeat these words? Why should our children be assaulted daily with garbage under the guide of first amendment rights to say nothing about responsibility? I challenge those are so supportive of unlimited free speech without responsibility to question why they have not spoken out for the right of Anton Mohammad to testify here today and to speak out for independent media outlets. The corporate executives that lure our young people into believing it is all right to destroy the culture of people seem to have targeted black women and our families who contributed too much to this society.

We believe in freedom of speech but with every right goes a responsibility. We have a right to earn money but we have a corresponding responsibility to pay taxes. We have a right to travel

on public transportation but a responsibility not to carry guns onto them. We have a right to have children but a responsibility not to abuse and neglect them. Mr. Chairman, using the public airwaves and public forums may be our right but the line must be drawn and balanced by the responsibility to refrain from painting an immoral image of an entire race of people and of black women in particular.

Not only entertainment executives but advertisers must act more responsibly. Why should we want to buy a product that pays for our destruction? Mr. Chairman, those of us who use public airwaves must be made to understand that there are consequences for those who insist upon subjecting our children to songs like "Read a Book," and the words are just too bizarre for me to mention here today. When you see the video and hear the words, you will understand why we are so highly disturbed. Along with the right of freedom of speech goes the responsibility not to bombard those airwaves and our public forums with filthy, derogatory, offensive, indecent language that crosses the line of decency. We are not objecting to what goes on in adult nightclubs here. We are talking about what is brought to our children and they deserve better images.

Nearly 15 years ago my predecessor, the late Dr. C. Delores Tucker, warned us about where we were headed when we allow unrestricted rights to spew vicious, hateful words about women and how this contributes to violence and disrespect in our society, and I know, Mr. Chairman, you would agree the results have come to pass. On occasion we turn on our television and we black women are embarrassed and humiliated by what we see when we see women who are portrayed as gangsters and men who are portrayed as pimps and women as prostitutes and the thuggishness that we see there with no mention of the great works of great black people, no balance whatsoever. What we are often seeing on television, videos and elsewhere is not the culture of the black people I know. Our culture has more to do with respecting our elders, our sisters, our mothers, our grandmothers, but where are those images? In our culture, the gangster is the exception. The thug, the pimp, the prostitute, those are the exceptions. Many black men and women serve this country with honor and distinction and deserve better treatment.

In conclusion, I would like to say black women have served this country as Surgeons General, Secretary of Labor, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Secretary of State, in Congress, as diplomats, as college presidents, in law, medicine and all walks of life and rarely do we ever hear public officials even speaking out about balancing rights with responsibilities when it comes to the images portrayed of black women and our families. Don Imus was wrong when he belittled the young women at Rutgers. Cortland Malloy of the Washington Post is usually right on the issues but he just plain got it wrong when he belittled our efforts to demand better images of women and our families in our Enough is Enough Campaign. Isiah Thomas, as mentioned before, is wrong when he says that it is highly offensive for a white male to call a black female the "B" word. Well, it is wrong then but it is always wrong.

Mr. Chairman, we in the Women's Coalition for Dignity and Diversity respect the first amendment and we believe in the right to

free speech but we also believe in decent speech. Yes, rights without responsibility should be labeled anarchy yet that is much of what we see and hear on our public airwaves and in public forums. It is time for Congress to stand up and to insist upon responsibility and to insist that others take responsibility and make that clear to the FCC and the FTC, what their roles should be in making it happen. We can't and we won't sit around and wait for gangster rap or hip hop or anything else in our society with those vicious media images of us to self-destruct. We are not just talking about BET here either, and its parent company, Viacom, about bombarding our community with vicious images. We are talking about everyone who does it in all walks of life. Being credited with or blamed for the diminishing sales of gangster rap, Mr. Chairman, and offensive language and images is a banner we women proudly bear but it is not happening because we allowed it to self-destruct. It is happening because we have been intent on making it happen for years, at least since the National Congress of Black Women began this campaign nearly 15 years ago.

Again, Mr. Chairman, we thank you so much for having this hearing today. We women are glad that we finally have our chance to say something public because we witnessed so much time when we were never called upon, so we appreciate you for calling on us today.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Williams follows:]

STATEMENT OF FAYE WILLIAMS

Chairman Rush and members of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection, on behalf of the Women's Coalition on Dignity and Diversity, representing more than 11 million women and their families, we thank you for holding this hearing.

Our coalition is made up of diverse groups of women from numerous organizations'such as the National Council of Negro Women, Rainbow-PUSH, National Action Network, National Organization for Women, Feminist Majority, the YWCA, the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, the National Congress of Black Women, as well as women in sports, religion, labor, business and all walks of life.

Mr. Chairman, we women, especially we black women and our children, have been bombarded with misogyny, violence and obscenity through public airwaves day after day. In a society that claims that it is fair and seeks justice for all, too many corporate leaders in the entertainment business have captured the rawness of the feelings of many black males, and a few black females, who feel disenfranchised. Some rap music which began with a positive purpose, now taps into the psyche of black teens who have a sense that no one cares that young black males are routinely getting the short end of the stick in America. They look at what is happening in the Jena 6 case in my home State, Louisiana, and they have reason to believe they should be angry with everybody—even with black women and black elders who've given their all to try to make life better for them.

Instead of putting adequate funds into the education and care of young people, and the assurance of jobs and a chance to build their own businesses, our system has failed them by steadily diverting funds into war and destruction. We have not always provided the kinds of options that would prevent our young people from idolizing the lives of thugs, pimps, warlords or other negative images. Too many of us have criticized young people for denigrating and disrespecting women and black people in order to make a living, when they are offered no decent options.

We have allowed greedy corporate executives—especially those in the entertainment industry—to lead many of our young people to believe that is okay to entertain themselves by destroying the culture of our people. We know all too well what happened to our Native American brothers and sisters in movies through the years. The profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity we see and hear today have become common place to the point of being genocidal.

Even our very young babies have become subjected to horrifying language and images on public airwaves by those who should know better, but are claiming that this is the only way to relate to our children. If you haven't seen the so-called public service advertisement that looks like just another cartoon, called Read a Book, you need to see it to understand what I am talking about. What are teachers to do when they hear these children repeat these words?

Why should our children be assaulted daily with garbage under the guise of First amendment rights that say nothing about responsibility?

The corporate executives that lure our young people into believing it is all right to destroy the culture of a people seem to have targeted black women and our families who've contributed so much to this nation. The same can be said historically about our Native American sisters and their families.

We believe in freedom of speech, but with every right goes responsibility. We have a right to earn money, but we have a corresponding responsibility to pay income taxes.We have a right to travel on public transportation such as airplanes, but a responsibility not to carry on or even mention guns or other weapons while riding. We have a right to have children, but a responsibility not to abuse or neglect them.

Mr. Chairman, using the public airwaves may be a right, but the line must be drawn and balanced by the responsibility to refrain from painting an immoral image of an entire race of people—and of black women in particular. Not only entertainment executives, but advertisers must act more responsibly. Why should we want to buy a product that pays for our destruction?

Mr. Chairman, those who use the public airwaves must be made to understand that there are consequences for those who insist upon subjecting our children to songs like Read a Book. The words are too bizarre to mention in this hearing, but it's easy enough to hear them on the Internet or on television.

When you see the video and hear the words, you will understand why we are so highly disturbed about what is brought to our children—while those who bring it castigate those of us who object to it. We all want our children to read a book, but our children are not so dumb that they need to be told in such vile and bizarre language to do so. Along with the right of freedom of speech goes the responsibility not to bombard those airwaves with filthy, derogatory, offensive, indecent language that crosses the line of decency and shocks the conscience of all who hear or see it. We're not objecting to what goes on in adult clubs here; we're talking about what is brought to our children who deserve better images.

Nearly 15 years ago, my predecessor, the late Dr. C. DeLores Tucker, warned us about where we were headed when we allow unrestricted rights to spew vicious, hateful words about women, and how this contributes to violence and disrespect. The results have come to pass.

On occasion, we turn our televisions on and we are embarrassed and humiliated to see so many black men and women portrayed as gangsters, pimps, prostitutes, and thugs—with no mention of the great works of our people—no balance what-so-ever.

What we so often see on television, videos and elsewhere is not the culture of the people I know. It's not the culture of the majority of black people. Our culture has more to do with respecting our elders, our sisters, our mothers and grandmothers—but where are those images? In our culture, the gangster is the exception; the thug is the exception; the pimp is the exception; the prostitute is the exception. Many black men and women serve this country with honor and distinction, and deserve better treatment.

Black women have served this country as Surgeon General, Secretary of Labor, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Secretary of State, in Congress, as Diplomats, as college Presidents, in law, medicine and all walks of life—and too rarely do we even hear many of our public officials speak out about balancing rights with responsibilities when it comes to the images portrayed of black women and our families on public airwaves. Don Imus was wrong when he belittled the young women at Rutgers. Courtland Milloy of the Washington Post is usually right on the issues, but he just plain got it wrong when he belittled our efforts to demand better images of women and our families in our "Enough is Enough" campaign. Isiah Thomas is wrong when he says that it's highly offensive for a white male to call a black female a b****, but it's okay for a black man to do so. Well, Mr. Thomas would be surprised to know that they're equally offensive and totally unacceptable to black women.

Chairman Rush, we in the Women's Coalition for Dignity and Diversity respect the First Amendment rights of every citizen. We believe in the right to free speech, but we also believe in decent speech.

Yes, rights without responsibilities should be labeled anarchy; yet that is much of what we see and hear on our public airwaves. It's time for Congress to stand up

and insist upon responsibility, and make it clear to the FCC and the FTC what their roles should be in making it happen. That is what we in the Women's Coalition for Dignity and Diversity are saying.

We can't, and we won't, sit around and wait for gangsta rap and other vicious media images of us to self destruct. We're not just talking about BET, and its parent company, Viacom, about bombardment of our community with vicious images of women and of black people. We call upon all media to be more responsible. We also call upon advertisers to be more sensitive to the pain these negative images cause those of us being targeted.

I conclude by repeating what President Lyndon Johnson once said, "How incredible it is that in this fragile existence we should hate and destroy one another!" And I say that without responsibility, that is exactly what happens to women and our families each time someone decides to denigrate us on public airwaves for the almighty dollar, and in the name of free speech.

Being credited with, or being blamed for, the diminishing sales of gangsta rap and offensive language and images is a banner we proudly wear; but it's not happening because we allowed it to self destruct. It's happening because we've been intent upon making it happen for years—at least since the National Congress of Black Women began our campaign nearly 15 years ago, with others joining us recently.

We have a long way to go, Mr. Chairman, and we still need your help. We need Mr. Markey's help and the help of every Member of this Subcommittee and the Committee on Energy and Commerce to rein in what should and what should not be seen or said so freely on public airwaves.

We need the Progressives, Conservatives, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, and all others to talk not just about rights of free speech, but also about the responsibilities inherent in this great freedom. Again, we thank you for your courage in holding these hearings.

STATEMENT OF LISA FAGER BEDIAKO, PRESIDENT, INDUSTRY EARS, ODENTON, MD

Ms. BEDIAKO. Actually I am the only person up here without a Ph.D.

Mr. WILLIAMS. That is all right. You are good. You have good information.

Ms. BEDIAKO. I have an M.B.A.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify today on the business of stereotypes and degrading images. My name is Lisa Fager Bediako and I am the president and cofounder of Industry Ears. Industry Ears is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, independent organization which is focused on the impact media has on communities of color and children since 2003. My cofounder, Paul Porter, and I have collectively more than 40 years of experience working in media and entertainment companies including BET, Clear Channel Communications, Emmetts Communications, Discovery Communications, CBS Radio, Capital EMI Records, Def Jam Records and Radio One, to name a few. Using our insiders' knowledge, we created Industry Ears and *IndustryEars.com* to address the myths and misconceptions about the media and entertainment industry and how they operate, and more importantly, to develop effective means to combat the negative consequences of harmful media images and messages on children, particularly children of color.

The now-infamous Imus incident is intriguing in that it has created strange bedfellows. It has unified both conservative and liberal media invoking hip hop music as a veritable poster child of all that is wrong with society. This is a popular argument made in the throes of Imus oft-repeated "nappy-head hos" comment. Such language pales in comparison to the content of most commercialized hip hop music. The idea is that if radio stations and Viacom music channels can play the b****, n*****, ho content of gangsta rap-

pers, then what is so bad about the Imus comment. If the black community apparently accepts such language from its own, then why get upset when Don Imus says it.

What appears to be more difficult to understand, especially to our friends in the news media, is there exists a large cadre of individuals and organizations that represent communities of color that also are in an uproar when media permit content that is degrading to women and people of color. Note that unlike conservative and liberal media hype, our concern is not simplistically directed at the artists who produce such material. Our concern is also directed towards the record labels, radio stations and music video channels, i.e., the corporations that are profiting from and allowing such material to air. This is a fact that often gets overlooked in mainstream media: not all black people and not all lovers of hip hop like myself endorse materialism, violence and misogyny that characterize commercial rap music. It is time to wake up and see the real issue. The media conglomerates are the gatekeepers of content and in essence control what opinions receive airtime.

The deletion of the Fairness Doctrine and the passage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act help to create incredibly big media corporations by eliminating the requirements that balance viewpoints be presented, and by relaxing rules, placing limits on how much media a single corporation can own. Further, by repealing the Tax Certification Program, which successfully, if temporarily, increased ownership of media outlets by people of color, we have ensured that these big media corporations do not represent the diversity of society. With the control of so much media concentrated in the hands of a very few, we are at the mercy of big media and rely on companies to serve the best interest of the public while also serving their bottom line. And as might seem obvious, what best serves the public interest and what best serves the bottom line are not always the same. This is evidenced by the fact that CBS fired Imus only when corporate sponsors started to pull out.

Commercial hip hop has flourished in this environment, giving public perception that what you see and what you hear on radio and TV has been set in the community standard. The Federal Communications Commission states that it is a Federal violation to broadcast indecent or sexually explicit content between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. However, songs that discuss explicit sexual situations including oral sex, rape, casual sex and gang sex receive daily spins on radio stations and video channels that cater to the 12–17 demographic.

Freedom of speech has been shown by the industry conglomerates to mean the "B" word, the "N" word and "ho" while censoring and eliminating hip hop music that discusses Hurricane Katrina, the Iraqi war, the Jena 6, dangers of gun violence and drugs and songs that have contained words like "George Bush" and "Free Mummia." In 2005, MTV and radio stations around the country self-regulated themselves to remove the word "white man" from the Kanye West hit song "All Fall Down." The lyrics demonstrated the far reach of capitalism by explaining drug dealers like Jordans, crackheads like crack, and a white man gets paid from all of that. When asked why they decided to dub "white man" from the lyrics, the response from MTV was, we did not want to offend anyone.

Today hip hop is bombarded by the demeaning images of black male thugs and the sleazy video vixen. Record labels and their executives choose to support and promote these images for airplay solely as if these are the only images that represent black people. I understand that payola is out of the scope of the subcommittee. However, I think it is important to mention because it is a major contributor to how music receives radio and video airplay. The former attorney general Eliot Spitzer, now governor of New York, made deals with four major record labels totaling $30.1 million as with two broadcasters for another $6.25 million in a statewide payola investigation that also implicated many outside of the State of New York. Meanwhile, the FCC settled with a consent decree that stopped a Federal investigation of payola and allowed broadcasters to avoid a finding of liability by this violation and entering into a settlement agreement costing them a measly combined total of $12.5 million, and then on top of that, they do not have to admit guilt. All over the country, you have identical play lists from station to station no matter the radio format, and it is no coincidence. Payola is no longer the local DJ receiving a couple dollars under the table. It is now an organized corporate crime that supports the lack of balanced content and demeaning imagery with no consequences.

A good example of records, radio and corporate partnerships include the song on Virgin record label called "Miss New Booty" and there is a sheet under your copies of this picture, and this is what I am referring to. This song performed by a white rapper was silly and tasteless but the promotion by the record label and the partnership with Girls Gone Wild was truly offensive. A local Washington DJ on an urban radio station in Washington, DC, at 5 p.m. promoted the tune by suggesting he would like to visit the *MissNewBooty.com* Web site to masturbate. The Web site created by Virgin Records asks girls to enter a contest for the best new booty. The girls are required to take photos of their butts and post them online. Each week people would vote for the best booty of the week and the winner receiving a chance to be in a music video. It was obvious that girls under 17 were entering the contest. Some even listed their MySpace account, making it easy for the child predator. The Girls Gone Wild partner was listed on top of the Web site and linked and making it easy for preteens and others to access. I wrote an open letter to Virgin Records and Jermaine Dupree at the time, who was president of urban music at Virgin, responded by saying it was all in fun, it wasn't about sex. Later that same month Jermaine Dupree appeared in an article in Billboard magazine and said that hip hop was inspired by strip clubs. Go figure.

It is important to note that African-American children listen and watch more radio and television than any other demographic. Although top 40 and hip hop radio stations claim to target 18–34 demographics as well as the MTV and BET stations, their largest audience share are the 12- to 17-year-old segment. Record companies, radio stations and Viacom are aware of their audience but have chosen to put the bottom line above the welfare of the audience.

In the hip hop documentary "Hip Hop Beyond Beats," a group of white teens are asked what they think about hip hop. They explain hip hop gives us a better insight into black culture and it is like

how it is to grow up in the ghetto as if all black people had the same experience. Bakari Kitwana, professor and author of several books dealing with hip hop and politics——

Mr. RUSH. Ms. Bediako——

Ms. BEDIAKO. I am going to wrap it up.

Mr. RUSH. Please.

Ms. BEDIAKO. I am going to tell you what he said. He was doing research and he asked a group of white women if they were offended by rappers using the term "b****" to describe women and they said no, because they are only referring to black women.

In sum, I just want to say I am sure the industry will shrug at the notion that these actions that they have done have led or influenced any behavior and so I strongly suggest that a research study look at these direct impacts of degrading and stereotypical images on children and adults. This study will help us understand the direct implications and back up the policy and regulations that need to be implemented and enforced.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Fager-Bediako follows:]

Testimony of

Lisa Fager Bediako

of

Industry Ears, Inc.

On

"From Imus to Industry: The Business of Stereotypes and Degrading Images."

Before the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection of the

Committee on Energy and Commerce

On

Tuesday, September 25, 2007

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Business of Stereotypes and Degrading Images. My name is Lisa Fager Bediako, and I am the President and co-founder of Industry Ears.

Industry Ears is a nonprofit, nonpartisan and independent organization which has focused on the impact media has on communities of color and children since 2003. My co-founder, Paul Porter and I have, collectively, more than 40 years of experience working for media and entertainment companies including Black Entertainment Television, Clear Channel Communications, Emmis Communications, Discovery Communications, CBS radio, Capital-EMI records, Def Jam Records, AOL, NBA Entertainment, Radio One, Discovery.com, and Inner City Broadcasting. Using our insiders' knowledge, we created Industry Ears and industryears.com to address the myths and misconceptions about how media and the entertainment industry operate; and, more importantly, to develop effective means to combat the negative consequences of harmful media messages and images on children, particularly children of color.

My testimony today will focus on the following: 1) the fallout following the Imus incident, including the identity of the real culprits, and their roles in perpetuating stereotypes; 2) the disproportionate impact of negative media on the African American community; 3) the beneficiaries of negative and stereotypical media messages; and finally, some Industry Ears recommendations to address these problems.

The now-infamous "Imus Incident" is intriguing in that it has created strange bedfellows: it has unified both conservative and liberal media in invoking Hip Hop music as the veritable poster child of all that is wrong with society. That is, a popular argument made in the throes of Imus' oft-repeated "nappy-headed hoes[1]" comment is that such language pales in comparison to the content of most commercialized Hip Hop music. The idea is that if radio stations and Viacom music channels can play the "bitch, ho, nigga" content of gangsta rappers, then what is so bad about Imus' comment? If the Black community apparently accepts such language from its own, then why get upset when Don Imus says it?

It is easy for me to understand why Black folk would be in an uproar over a White man referring to young Black women as "nappy headed hoes" on a nationally syndicated radio show, as a Black woman, that part should be intuitive. However, what appears to be more difficult to understand – especially to our friends in the news media – is that there exists a large cadre of individuals and organizations that represent communities of color that *also* are in an uproar when media permits content that is degrading to women and people of color to be broadcast. Note that, unlike the conservative and liberal media hypes, our concern is not simplistically directed at the artists who produce such material; our concern is also directed towards the record labels, radio stations, and music video channels (*i.e., the corporations*) that are profiting from allowing such material to air.

This is the fact that often gets overlooked in the mainstream media. Not all Black people and not all lovers of Hip Hop endorse the materialism, violence, and misogyny that

1 As educators, Industry Ears takes the position that, if music with profane or obscene lyrics is played during the hours that our children are listening, we should not shy away from quoting those lyrics in order to raise awareness.

characterize commercial rap music. Organizations and campaigns such as Industry Ears, Enough is Enough, Social Action Coalition, Youth Media Council, Third World Majority, Woman's Coalition for Decency and Dignity, REACHip Hop, Free Mix Radio and many individuals have been challenging such content for years, but their visibility has been blocked by the mainstream media. For example, during the week in which Imus was suspended and subsequently fired by CBS, I was called by three national news outlets to speak about the hip hop music issue. However, each outlet only wanted me to defend the commercialized Hip Hop industry; no one was interested in the fact that I also agreed that "bad" content applies across the board and should also be dealt with. The message is clear: If you do not fit the "role" media has created for ratings you lose your opportunity to be heard.

It is time to wake up and see the real issue – that media conglomerates are the gatekeepers of content and in essence control what opinions receive airtime. The deletion of the Fairness Doctrine and passage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act helped to create incredibly powerful, big media corporations by eliminating the requirement that balanced viewpoints be presented, and by relaxing rules placing limits on how much media a single corporation could own. Further, by repealing the tax certificate program, which successfully – if temporarily - increased ownership of media outlets by people of color, we have ensured that these big media corporations do not represent the diversity of society. Then, with control of so much media concentrated in the hands of the very few, we are at the mercy of big media and rely on companies to serve in the best interest of the public while also serving their bottom line.

As might seem obvious, what best serves the public, and what best serves the bottom line are not always the same. This is evidenced by the fact that CBS fired Imus only when corporate sponsors started to pull out; Imus has made offensive and derogatory statements before. Commercialized Hip Hop has flourished in this environment, giving public perception that what you see and hear on radio and TV has been set as community standard. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) states that it is a federal violation to broadcast indecent or sexually explicit content between the hours of 6am and 10pm. However, songs that discuss explicit sexual situations including oral sex, rape, casual sex and gang sex receive daily spins on radio stations and video music channels that cater to the 12-17 year old demographic.

Freedom of speech has been spun by industry conglomerates to mean the *b-word*, *n-word* and *ho* while censoring and eliminating Hip Hop music that discusses Hurricane Katrina, the Iraqi War, Jena 6, dangers of gun violence and drugs and songs that contains words like "George Bush" and "Free Mumia." In 2005, MTV and radio stations around the country self-regulated themselves to remove the words "white man" from the Kanye West hit single *All Fall Down*. The lyrics demonstrated the far reach of capitalism by exclaiming */Drug dealers buy Jordans, crackheads buy crack/ And a white man get paid off of all of that/*. When asked why they decided to dub "white man" from the lyrics the response from MTV was "we didn't want to offend anyone."

Today, Hip Hop is bombarded by the demeaning images of the black male thug and the sleazy video vixen. Record labels and their executives choose to support and promote these images for airplay solely as if these are the only images that represent black people.

I understand that payola is out of the scope of this subcommittee, however I think it is important to mention, because it is a major contributor to how music receives radio and video airplay.

Former Attorney General Elliott Spitzer, now Governor of New York made deals with four major record labels – Sony BMG, Warner, Universal and EMI totaling $30.1 million as well as with two broadcasters, CBS and Entercom, for another $6.25 million in his state-wide payola investigation that also implicated many outside of New York. Meanwhile, the FCC settled with a consent decree that stopped the federal investigation of payola and allowed broadcasters to avoid a finding of liability for this violation by entering into a settlement agreement costing them a measly $12.5 million in combined fees.

All over the country you have identical playlists from station to station no matter what the radio format and it's no coincidence. Payola is no longer the local DJ receiving a couple dollars for airplay; it is now an organized corporate crime that supports the lack of balanced content and demeaning imagery with no consequences. Broadcaster claims that this is what listeners want to hear is not honest. Radio stations only research the songs that are currently being played on the radio (*i.e. songs that are paid for*). New artists with new songs do not get tested. This explains the identical playlists and the exclusion of local and regional artist airplay on radio stations.

Stereotypes and degrading images in both radio and television disproportionately impact the African American community. There are a wealth of shows on networks like Viacom that capitalize and profit from demeaning women and black people, including the following examples:

- *Flavor of Love* , which stars former Public Enemy artist Flavor Flav, as a modern buffoon, focused solely on the objectification of women
- *Where My Dogs At* is an animated program which includes an episode where a rapper leads black women on leashes, like dogs, down a red carpet, where one of the women defecates on the floor.
- *Yo Momma* pits teens against each other to yell disrespecting and sometimes racist insults, and
- *We Can Do Better aka a Hot Ghetto Mess* demeans and makes fun of every day people all in the name of entertainment. The cumulative effect suggests to the targeted audience that this is the way things are and how they should act.

A good example of records, radio and corporate partnerships includes a song on Virgin Records label called, "Ms. New Booty." This song, performed by a white rapper was silly and tasteless, but the promotion by the record label and partnership with *Girls Gone Wild* was truly offensive. A local Washington DC DJ at 5pm promoted the tune by suggesting he likes to visit the MsNewBooty.com website to masturbate. The website created by Virgin Records asked girls to enter a contest for the "best new booty." Girls were required to take photos of their butts and post them online. Each week people would vote for the best "booty" of the week with the winner receiving a chance to be in a

music video. It was obvious that girls under 17 were entering the contest (some even listed their myspace accounts making it easy for child predators). The *Girls Gone Wild* partner was listed at the top of the website and linked making it easy for pre-teens and others to access. I wrote an open letter to Virgin records and Jermaine Dupri, President of urban music responded by saying, "it was all in fun and it wasn't about sex." Later that same month Jermaine Dupri appeared in an article in Billboard magazine and stated "Southern Hip Hop is inspired by strip clubs."

It is important to note, that African American children listen and watch more radio and television than any other demographic. Although Top 40 and Hip Hop radio stations claim to target the 18-34 demographic their largest audience share are the 12-17 year old segment. Recording companies, radio stations and Viacom networks are aware of their audience but have chosen to put the bottom line above the welfare of their audiences. In the documentary, *Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes*, a group of white teens are asked what they think about Hip Hop. They explained, "Hip Hop gives a better insight into black culture and what its like to grow up in the ghetto," as if all black people had the same experience. Bakari Kitwana, professor and author of several books dealing with Hip Hop and politics said when he was researching information for his next book he asked white women from all of the country what they felt about rappers who used the b-word to describe women? The overwhelming majority responded by saying, "they were not offended because the rappers weren't describing them, they were only talking about black women."

These perpetuated stereotypes and demeaning images are reflective in the behavior and attitudes of children and specifically children of color. We see an increase in risky sexual behavior – black girls 15-24 years old represent the fastest growing segment of HIV patients, devaluing of education and rise in the dropout rate – reports show as high as 75% dropout rate among black 9th grade boys, unhealthy interpersonal relationships, increase in aggression, a normalization of criminal activity and materialism.

In sum, because I'm sure the industry will shrug at the notion that their actions have led to or influenced any of this behavior; I strongly suggest that a research study look at the direct impact of degrading and stereotypical images on children and adults. This study will help us understand the direct implications and back up the policy and regulations that need to be implemented and enforced.

Thank you, I will be happy to answer your questions.

Mr. RUSH. Thank you very much.

Dr. Dill, please, around 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF KAREN DILL, PH.D., LENOIR-RHYNE COLLEGE, HICKORY, NC

Ms. DILL. Chairman Rush, thank you so much for inviting me here and I am very pleased that you are holding this hearing today about this important subject. We Americans spend two-thirds of our waking lives consuming media, be it television, movies, video games or the Internet. Media consumption is the No. 1 waking activity of choice for U.S. Americans, commanding on average 3,700 hours of each citizen's time annually. The average American child devotes 45 hours plus per week of what we call screen time, which is combined television and others forms of media. This alone I think America is putting serious attention into looking at media education in our school system. It is what children do with their time.

Since culture is our shared reality created and sustained through common experience, American culture is now largely what is shaped and maintained by the mass media be it television, video games or music. Media creates meaning, it creates shared beliefs and values and even rules for behavior. They all tell us stories, project images and communicate ideas. Since we are social creatures, it is natural for us to learn who we are, how we should act, feel, think and believe through the stories of our common culture. We were not created to have social interactions on the media. We treat our interactions with the media like they were real-life face-to-face interactions and that is how we learn through that information. If we see a black person behaving a certain way in the media, we think oh, this is social information, this is real behavior.

This creation of culture through popular media was sadly exemplified recently when radio personality Don Imus referred to a college women's basketball team as "nappy-headed hos." Sadder still, many responded that the racist and sexist language was acceptable because that type of language is used by minority members in rap music. Unfortunately, racist and sexist slurs influence real people, for example, sending the message to girls that this is how our society views you and causing issues with self-esteem and with identity. Over and over again I have had the chance to talk with people about media and by and large what I find is that people do not believe they are affected by media at all. Studies show this. People do not believe they are affected by the media. As an example, a recent study showed that the more violent video games you play, the less you think people are affected by playing violent video games.

There is a lot of reasons for these different misperceptions about the media. I will name a few here. First of all, we all have a natural tendency to not want to believe that our habits are harmful. We don't want to believe that our child playing a violent video game can have a negative influence. That would make us a bad parent or a bad person. We have a mistaken view of how media affects us. For example, we think media effects need to be immediate and very extreme. People say to me often, I play lots of violent video games and I haven't picked up a gun and gone out and shot someone. Well, that is not how media effects work. Media creates a culture

and for example, we are talking about rap lyrics today. That creates a culture where we understand women, black women particularly in a certain way. It is not a matter of where you go out and shoot someone or behave in an extreme fashion. It is a cumulative effect.

Also, we misunderstand that media are produced primarily to entertain us. They are produced primarily to make a profit and the content follows. And finally, we have a tendency to believe that for an important event it must have an important cause so if someone is violent, it can't be caused by watching television or listening to a song. So there are lots of things that we don't understand about how the media works and again that just underlines the idea that we need a media education curriculum in our schools so that kids can understand this.

Research on music has demonstrated that exposure to violent rap videos increases adversarial sexual beliefs, meaning that we view men and women as enemies in the sexual sphere. It also increases the acceptance of relationship violence. Additionally, violent music lyrics have been shown to increase aggression.

The APA taskforce on the sexualization of girls just put out a report in 2007. It is an excellent piece of work and we have included in the written record that report for you to look at. That report found that when girls are exposed to images in the media of women as sex objects, a variety of negative outcomes follow. Sexualization is linked to negative consequences, both cognitive and emotional functioning, mental health including eating disorders, low self-esteem and depression, physical health and one's own sexual image also develops less healthy than it would.

To understand the psychology behind these issues, one must understand that aggression is in part motivated by a need for power, dominance and coercion. For example, current research characterizes domestic violence as being motivated by the need to coerce and dominate. Theoretically, both sexism and racism in the media are examples of social influence. Degrading women and minorities through sexist and racist language and imagery is a way to keep women and minorities quote, unquote, in their place. It creates a culture in which this true. I have several research examples summarized in my written testimony but I wanted to tell you about one study I conducted recently with my colleagues, Michael Collins and Brian Brown. We exposed young people to either sexist stereotypes or to professional men and women and then we had them read a story, a real-life story about a woman who experienced sexual harassment from her college professor, and then we asked them questions about this and what we found was that the men who had been exposed to the sexist images were less likely to say the event really was sexual harassment, to say it was serious and damaging and to show empathy for the victim. They were more likely to blame the victim and choose less severe punishment for the perpetrator.

Today we heard that if you don't like a piece of music or a television show, you can just turn it off, but you can't turn off your culture. This kind of imagery pervades the culture.

In conclusion, we enjoy freedom of expression in this country but no country can grant us freedom from consequences. My message

today is that violence, hatred, racism and sexism in the media do matter and I would call for two things: one, more research and more funding for research on this topic, and two, as I have said, to implement a curriculum in our schools which would be referred to as media literacy training, and I can give more information on that if anyone is interested but is just a basic education about how the media work and this helps young people cope with those images that they see in the media.

Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity to testify.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dill follows:]

Statement of Karen E. Dill, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Psychology
School of Social & Behavioral Sciences
Lenoir-Rhyne College

Before the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection

U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Hearing on "*From Imus to Industry: The Business of Stereotypes and Degrading Images*"

September 25, 2007

Chairman Rush, Ranking Member Stearns and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today. I am Dr. Karen Dill and have been conducting research in the field of media psychology since 1994. My specialization is in media violence, violence against women, video games, and stereotyping of women and minorities in the media. In this capacity, I have co-authored a statement on interactive media violence which led to the American Psychological Association's (APA) Resolution on Violence in Video Games and Interactive Media, adopted in 2005. In addition, I currently serve on the APA committee on Interactive Media and have published in the field of media psychology with an emphasis on video games, violence and gender stereotypes. My dissertation, *Video Games and Aggressive Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviors in the Laboratory and in Life*, co-authored with my mentor Dr. Craig Anderson, is the single most-cited research paper on video game violence effects.

Americans spend two-thirds of our waking lives consuming mass media. Be it television, movies, music, video games or the internet, media consumption is the number one activity of choice for Americans – commanding, on average, 3700 hours of each citizen's time annually[1]. The average American child devotes 45 hours per week to media consumption, more time than she spends in school[2].

Since culture is our shared reality, created and sustained through common experience, American culture is now largely that which is shaped and maintained by the mass media. Television, video games, music and other forms of media create meaning including shared beliefs, values and rules. Television, games, songs and movies tell stories, project images and communicate ideas. Since we are social creatures, it is natural

for us to learn who we are, how we should act, feel, think and believe through the stories of our common culture.

This creation of culture through popular media was sadly exemplified recently when radio personality Don Imus referred to a college women's basketball team as "nappy-headed ho's." Sadder still, many responded that the racist and sexist language was acceptable because that type of language is used by minorities in rap music. Unfortunately racist and sexist slurs influence real people, for example sending the message to girls that this is how our society views them and causing issues with self esteem and identity.

When people say that media messages do not matter, they do not understand the psychology behind the media. For example, research on the third person effect[3] has shown repeatedly that people believe that they themselves are immune to being affected by negative media content such as media violence, but that they believe other people, especially children, are affected. A recent study showed that the more violent video games you play, the less likely you are to believe that you are affected by video game violence. Reasons for these misperceptions include 1) the natural tendency to reject the notion that our habits are harmful 2) a mistaken view of how media effects work[4] (e.g., that media violence effects are always immediately observable and extreme such as murder) and 3) that media are produced primarily to entertain us[4] (rather than to make a profit) and 4) that media do not affect the viewer (including the tendency to believe that important effects such as violence must have an important cause, not a trivial cause such as watching television[5]).

Research on music has demonstrated that exposure to violent rap videos increases adversarial sexual beliefs (viewing men and women as enemies in the sexual sphere), negative mood, and acceptance of relationship violence[6] (for example, believing it is acceptable for a boyfriend to shove his girlfriend out of jealousy). Additionally, violent music lyrics have been shown to increase aggressive thoughts and feelings. Across a number of studies in which researchers controlled for artist, style and other relevant factors, results showed conclusively that it was the aggressive content that caused the observed changes[7].

APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls

In 2007, the **APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls** found that when girls are exposed to images in the media of females as sex objects, a variety of negative outcomes follow (see attached APA press release). Sexualization is linked to negative consequences for cognitive and emotional functioning (including impaired performance on mental activities), mental health (including eating disorders, low self esteem, and depression), physical health, and healthy sexual development.

Media Violence Research and Issues Relevant to Women and Girls

To understand the psychological research on media and women's issues, it is important to keep in mind that one major motive for aggression is a desire for power, control and dominance[8]. For example, current research characterizes domestic violence as motivated primarily by a man's desire to dominate and control his wife[9]. Theoretically, both sexism and racism in the media are examples of social influence – degrading women and minorities through sexist and racist language and imagery is a way to keep women and minorities "in their place."

Research spanning different forms of media has clearly demonstrated that sexist content causes negative effects on girls and women[10]. What follows is representative of research findings that relate to media and aggression against women:

Those who watch more TV are more likely to hold dysfunctional beliefs about relationships and are more accepting of sexual harassment against women[11]. Seeing ads where women are portrayed as sex objects increases rape-supportive attitudes in men[12]. Similarly, violent video game players are more likely than non-players to believe "rape myths" such as the idea that sometimes women "deserve" rape and to hold sexist beliefs such as the idea that men are more capable as leaders and professionals, and that women deserve less freedom than men and are subservient to men[13,14].

Detailed Research Examples

My colleagues and I[14] exposed young people to either sexist stereotypes – violent, "macho" males and sexually-objectified women – or to professional men and women (members of the US Congress). Next, participants read a true story where a male college professor sexually harassed a young, female college student – he put his hand on her thigh and she protested. Young men who had seen the sexist images were less likely to say the event really was sexual harassment, to say it was serious and damaging, and to show empathy for the victim. They were more likely to blame the victim and to choose less severe punishments for the perpetrator. In another phase of the study, males and females who were exposed to the sexist images were more likely to endorse rape-supportive beliefs such as the ideas that women like sexual force, that men should dominate women and that leading a man on sexually justifies sexual force. These findings are especially relevant given that recent research[15] shows that the overwhelming majority

of video game characters are presented in stereotypical ways, and that general youth audiences are aware of these stereotypes.

A Word on Racist Media Content

Similar to representations of women, media representations of minorities have traditionally been stereotypical. Recent research on common depictions of popular video game characters shows blatant stereotyping[15,16]. Black males are more likely than other characters to carry guns (especially extreme guns) and to fit the definition of a "thug" or "gangsta," and much more likely to be depicted as athletes[16]. This is troubling given that research shows that simply knowing a society's endorsement of a "Black criminal" stereotype is enough to make video game players shoot more unarmed Black targets than unarmed White targets[17].

Conclusions

We enjoy freedom of expression in this country, but no country can grant us freedom from consequences. Scientists call it cause and effect. To put it more poetically, you reap what you sow. If you want peace, plant peace. If you want justice, grow justice. If we plant the seeds of violence and hate, we, as a culture, will reap what we have sown.

My message today is that violence, hatred, racism and sexism in the media do matter. One way our government can ameliorate this situation is to act on the research findings by planning legislation and regulation accordingly. Beyond that, we have a dire need in our schools to implement a curriculum that teaches how the media work (known as *media literacy* training) so that if a child hears these messages she is better equipped to deal with them. We need to make our priorities protecting and empowering children and all people rather than placing emphasis on protecting the rights of special interests to

profit from selling messages of hate and injustice. We also need to recognize the deception involved with defending these harmful messages as freedom of expression. Thank you, again, for the opportunity to present this testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

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Mr. RUSH. Thank you so very much. I am going to begin my line of questioning with Professor Whiting.

Professor Sharpley-Whiting, in your testimony you talk about the long, demeaning and tragic history of African-American women all the way back to Thomas Jefferson, and you basically state that some of the contemporary commercial hip hop is simply continuing that unfortunate legacy. I had the privilege and honor of going to visit Ghana this past summer for their 50th anniversary. And we went to a slave castle and our tour guide explained to us about the slave castle. And the image that is implanted in my psyche is the image of the yard where all the women in a certain time of day were gathered to the yard, all the slave women, and on the balcony, like a second-floor balcony, this is where the captain or the head of the castle would come out invariably, the same hour every day, and selected the women who he would exploit and abuse, and there was a little contraption to the side and with a chain to it and a ball and this is where the women who were used for that moment would go. This is where they were held out in the sun beaming down on them. It was a very hot place. So it seems to me like it even goes beyond Thomas Jefferson. It seems to me like there has been—that there are two types in the psyche of slave culture. It is like modern-day culture to a great extent in racist culture. There are two types of black women, those who are asexual, the other kind of asexual women who are portrayed in a comical sense by the movies, Tyler Perry's movies, "Big Mama." Those are the asexual types but then you have the oversexed type that are portrayed in some of the hip hop videos, and so I agree with you, there is a continuum that exists. My question is, how do we effectively as a society, how do we effectively intervene with this powerful, powerful psychological force that creates a demeaning point of view, referenced image of our women? Imus was speaking to that, as far as I am concerned, and a lot of artists speak to that. Can you expand on your concept?

Ms. SHARPLEY-WHITING. Well, that is a huge question, Congressman. But let me say this. The reason why I wanted to begin with Jefferson was because it is critical for us to have historical context in thinking about the issues that women in general are dealing with and black women in particular, and it is very important for me to link Jefferson's ideas at the moment of the founding of the Nation. This is very important. And so I think although we can go back further, clearly the transatlantic slave trade is the moment in which black women were certainly denigrated, and as you have described that history very vividly and oversexualized and sexualized. I think what we are dealing with today, or what needs to happen today, is that young women are being handed their sexuality. They are being essentially told this is what it means to be sexy, to be affirmed. The images are extremely seductive. As a woman with a Ph.D., they are seductive to me even and I think we have to admit that as human beings, they are very intriguing. They are meant to be titillating, and so it is very difficult to resist them. Ms. Fager-Bediako, as she has described, that a particular demographic is very influenced by these images. It is absolutely important to recognize that there is a particular demographic being targeted and it is very susceptible to it but I think we all in some ways are quite

susceptible to it and seduced by it. I think that what we do need to begin with is with young women thinking about what does a healthy, affirming sexuality look like.

I also think that we really need to explore what do masculinity, male ways of behavior and manhood mean in this country. I think that there is a movement in this country for men to kind of reclaim masculinity or manhood, and part of that move means that women are hypersexualized and men embody a certain hypermasculinity, and this is not restricted to hip hop. When you can have a writer and Ph.D., a professor at Harvard, Harvey Mansfield, writing a book called "Manliness" in which he argues that men need to reclaim their manly space and that they have been beaten down by the feminist movement on C-SPAN "Book Notes" with Naomi Wolf, of all people, and argue that men essentially don't like women much because we are very different and that women, now that we have accepted that we are equal, we should also be able to accept that we are not quite equal. And so I think this is pervasive in the culture and we have to explore these things in tandem. We have a tendency to want to isolate certain musical expressions but I find Hooter's offensive in a lot of ways as I do aspects of hip hop culture and I find aspects of hip hop culture quite edifying in a lot of ways. So I am very reluctant to denounce the culture. But what I always like to say, and I will stop here, is that I am a professor of course in a research institution in the South, a very well-respected research institution and one that I am quite proud of but I have come from various kinds of research institutions and no one, particularly at Vanderbilt—let me be clear—has ever called me a "ho" but that doesn't mean that I haven't been treated like one or people have attempted to treat me like one. What that essentially means is people have attempted to box me into a category, to subordinate me in a certain way, and so the language—I am a little—I don't want us to go down the slippery slope of censorship because one doesn't necessarily have to call me that. But one can certainly attempt to treat me that way and so I think we need to explore all of our ways of being and our ways of communicating and disseminating ideas about what it means to be a woman and what it means to be a man.

Mr. RUSH. Dr. Rojecki, in a continuation of my initial question, in your written testimony you write that the black experience continues to provide vicarious thrills for white audiences. What do you mean by that?

Mr. ROJECKI. I think for the most part that black cultural products have defined what it means to be hip, what it means to be cool, and you only need look at young white males. My nephew, who grew up in a town in upstate New York, a town that has no African-Americans, started behaving kind of using kind of a hip hop lingo and wearing certain kinds of clothes and so on. That defines being cool and I think that has been the case for a long time. Coolness comes from a notion of being dangerous, sort of riding the line and so on, and that I think is a function of the kind of culture that we live in. It is very difficult I think to resist for hip hop artists not to respond to a demand that I think in large part comes from that kind of definition of what it means to be hip and cool. It is a very difficult puzzle to solve.

Mr. RUSH. I am kind of intrigued by something else that you indicate in your testimony. You point out that the largest audience for hip hop—and I think we probably for clarification purposes, we need to talk about hip hop, is it the conscious hip hop or the gangster hip hop? We need to kind of know which hip hop we are really talking about. I think that is one of the things that we have learned today that there different variations of hip hop. Would you say the audience for hip hop is white and that sensational images—and I quote you, "sensational images of sex and violence are used to package and promote the critical messages." Are you—can you quantify? Are you saying that the biggest audience for hip hop is not the urban African-American dweller but it is the suburban white young person? Is that what you said? Clarify that for me, if you will.

Mr. ROJECKI. That is exactly what I am saying, and I can't give you precise statistic because they are difficult to come by but I have heard anywhere from 50 to 60 to 70 percent of the market for this music is white.

Mr. RUSH. And what do you feel as though the effect is on the white consumer of this music?

Mr. ROJECKI. Well, you are essentially creating a demand within the white community for images of black stereotypes that the black community is then creating and being marketed through large corporations back out to those audiences. I think it is a vicious circle.

Mr. RUSH. Dr. Williams, you call for responsibility and sensitivity in the use of free speech. How do we as a loosely connected, well-meaning group of individuals and organizations, a well-meaning coalition, how do we really rise up to your challenge for sensitivity and responsibility? Where do we draw the line and how do we exercise a sense of responsibility and sensitivity while we also honor and respect the first amendment?

Ms. WILLIAMS. Yes. I think, well, first of all, we said that this is not just about hip hop or rap. We are talking about all segments of our society. I believe that we can begin to paint more positive pictures of black women and particular and other women, of course, in whatever we do. I believe we can stand up and we can defend and we can state the other side of it when we hear these negative things. We can talk about what we know. We can talk about our own culture. We can deny the fact that this pimp, ho, prostitute, et cetera kind of thing is a part of our culture or at least any big part of our culture. We can also coalesce. I believe that all of us have to—we are all guilty of it. We want our organization to be the one up front so we talk about what we do but I think we need to bring all of the organizations together that are looking for positive things and working on positive things for our young people to do and we can't wait until they grow up and teach them things they need to know. I believe we have to start and we have to stop blaming everything on the parents and saying well, the parents ought to take care of their children, the parents ought to decide what they look at. We have to understand that there are many parents themselves who don't know what to do. Also, there are many parents who are not wealthy like many of the men we saw earlier today. These parents have to go out and work, and when I say work, not just 9–5. Many of them are working a second and a third

job at night and they are not there to supervise their children, not because they don't want to be, but we need to begin to look at all families are our families, and as the popular saying is, it takes a village to raise a child. We just all have to accept more responsibility for doing that. But again, because mass media can affect so many people, I think we have to keep telling them that they have a responsibility to show something else. They have a responsibility to show that positive side of all of us and not just do things that would put us down because that is what we see so much. We know that, for instance, it was not intentional today but women were last to come on. We have to start lifting women up who are trying to do things and trying to better their lives like in our community. We need to put them out front. We went through it in the Imus incident. We saw people that I love and respect out there speaking for women but they were all men. We need to hear the voices of women more. We need to feel the pain of women when these things are happening to us, and men need to stand up more and be in defense of women just as we often have to hurt sometimes but defend our brothers sometimes. We want to see that same thing. We want to see the members of this committee not making excuses as unfortunately I have heard some Members of Congress today and defending. We have to forget about the fact that somebody gives $5,000 or $10,000 to our campaign or to our social event and we have to look at what is right, not just what is expedient for us to do to get those $5,000 and $10,000 or $20,000, whatever. The point is, we have got to look at the harm that this is doing to the people and listen to the voices of the women who are saying this hurts me, this hurts me to all of the men who decide what hurts and what does not hurt us. You can see the pain, and as you looked at women today, I am sure you saw the expression on some of our faces as we sat through hours of people deciding what is good for us and what is not good for us. We need to be involved. We have got to be at the table if we are going to make a difference. But again, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I mean, I am just preaching to the choir now, I know, but you asked the question.

Mr. RUSH. I sure did. Let me just say when I heard your testimony about Isiah Thomas, I kind of cringed. I know the Thomas family and I know that Isiah has to love his mama, all right, and his mama is a strong woman. She is the reason why he is Isiah Thomas, and so I don't know whether he made the connection between his African-American mama and the person that he was discussing when he made those unfortunate and I think wrongheaded remarks. That is what some of us forget, that be it not for black women, black men would not be even as far along as we are, and I take my hats off to you black women who have really carried the ball and were fathers and mothers for us.

Ms. WILLIAMS. Yes. Dick Gregory was here this morning and he often said that the two most important entities in our community are the black church and black women. Now, the black church obviously includes lots of men and so we are talking about there are good people out there all over. We just have to bring them out, force them to stand up and talk about this. I don't think the black church has yet dealt with this issue. We have to encourage them and challenge them and say you too have a responsibility to deal

with this issue. And on the other hand, we often hear black women have some things that we have to do in order for us to be treated differently. Well, that is what those of us at this table and many in this audience are trying to do. We try to be role models for our children. We are not like many athletes who say I am not—it is not my responsibility, I am not a role model. Every time a black person is educated, man or woman, we have the responsibility to give back to our community, to be a mentor for those young people, to lift their horizons and to challenge them to be better than they are. We wake up in the morning and of course our breath smells a little bad or we don't look so great but we put our best face on when we get ready to go out and that is what we have to continue to show our children: you have a responsibility to do something. My mother reared nine children without the benefit of a father in our home and I will tell you, my mother always told us, babies, you have to get up in the morning and go places like you are somebody special. You have to put on your best, whatever that is, look like somebody special going to do something important, and she said I can't be with you all the time. All I can do is teach you what you need to know to survive but you have to live your own life and die your own death and somewhere between you have to justify your existence, and I find black women all across this country justifying their existence every day, and I just think right on, sisters, and right on to the good brothers who are helping them.

Mr. RUSH. I just want to add that there is—we tried desperately——

Ms. WILLIAMS. That is why we in the National Congress give a Good Brother award every year.

Mr. RUSH. I tried desperately to get one of the women hip hop artists to appear on the panel with the hip hop, with panel 2. There are no women, as far as I know, who are CEOs of the parent companies. Now, we certainly could have had record or TV presidents. We could have had one of them to participate but we wanted to get the key decision makers, and that is the reason why panel 1 didn't have a black women and panel 2, we just couldn't get an artist.

Ms. WILLIAMS. Well, we just thank for bringing Master P because I think he did speak for many of us and what we were thinking and feeling here and he is offered to work with us and we agreed to work with him and we just look forward to hearing from more people like that. As you know, there is not even an image of a black woman in the United States Capitol today in remembrance of one and fortunately we are going to have one soon and hopefully things like that can begin to make it clear that black women are important, they have been important in the society and we do many things to make this country work and we are always willing to do what we ask someone else to do. Sojourner Truth, by the way, is the woman who will be in the Capitol soon.

Mr. RUSH. Ms. Fager Bediako, can you explain, tell us a little bit more about this contest?

Ms. BEDIAKO. Yes, I did a couple media projects with colleges and this particular project was done with the University of Maryland-College Park where students were asked to monitor local radio stations and then file complaints based on what the FCC states is

indecent, and somebody was like, "you know, I heard this DJ like at 5:00 talking about this Web site and this is when kids are listening," this is when the middle schooler is calling up and giving shout-outs to his friends and everything, so I was a little taken aback and here is a 19-year-old concerned about this, and he said, "Well do we complain to the FCC about this and I am like, "Sure. Did you go the Web site? Let us check it out." Well, the Web site, we were kind of freaked out by it because it is basically porn. There was no restrictions. There was no, like, even a minimum pop-up that says you have to be 18 didn't even pop up for them to tell us contacting Virgin, this wasn't about sex, I mean some of these girls, you don't even see their underwear, and some of them are like looking in the camera and taking a picture of their butts in the mirror, and it just takes you back and you are like this is allowed to happen and they want to keep telling us like it is not about sex it is a song about booty, except that it was a white rapper and in the video it is mostly black women and their butts and it is a silly song, and so we complained. The Web site then went up with a little 18-over thing but you can't keep kids off that, and the fact is, all the DJs in the area were mentioning the Web site, so somehow there was some promotion and it was like "hey, go to *MissNewBooty.com*. I mean, the Web site is not even up now. They took it down and it goes right to the rapper's web page if you try to access it. But this is part of a whole bunch of things. The local radio station here, the Clear Channel one that does top 40 music, has the "Breast Year Ever." That have an over 20 share of 12- to 17-year-olds that listen to the radio station. You never hear the radio stations bragging about, we have a 20 share in 12- to 17-year-olds. They only brag about their 18–34 or their 25–54 or whatever it is, and in reality all the hip hop stations have double digits, usually in the 20s, for kids, and this is what they are—the songs that you are hearing on the radio are the ones that David Banner was talking about that he did called "Play" that the clean version on the radio is talking about cleaning in your thong and playing with your clit. These are the songs that are on the radio. I don't know what slice of life—it is just like only the strip club slice of life is being reflected in the music that we are hearing on the radio like you never hear anything else, like there is—there isn't anything else, and one of the reasons you didn't have a female hip hop artist is because those record executives aren't signing them.

The other thing that David Banner didn't say and he kind of said but didn't say, when his—when he talks about his music career going down the hill, he was told "We need a hit song and we want something like "The Whisper Song." The "Whisper Song" was a huge song. The hook was "Wait until you see my d***" and sorry for the language, but this is what our kids are hearing, we should be upset, and the fact is, his song is very much that song and it went—and he was right, it was about dollars, and it went straight up and that is what the executives said that they wanted and that is what they got and he made money and they made money, and this culture keeps going but what happens with the females, MC Lyte can't get a deal, Lauren Hill can't get a deal. Method Man made a son that questioned BET. Do you think they are going to play that? No. Nothing that talks about white men or questions

their authority gets airplay on the radio or supported by the record labels but when we want to talk about each other, killing each other, evaluate education, that is OK. Again, just like the book, which I read and I loved, "The Black Image in the White Mind," it talks about basically we are entertainment for this—and it makes sense when you are talking about the white are buying more music, they are the larger population, and the fact is, there is another study by Mead Productions that said even our kids don't really even like hip hop after a certain age, like when they get to be like 19, they start loving R&B more than they like hip hop. So, it is not about us. We are the entertainment.

Mr. RUSH. Well, how do you deal with the images of Common or Kanye West, what is the underpinning and the rationale for their success? These would be hard hip hop artists.

Ms. BEDIAKO. Well, what is happening, if I had $18 million in my marketing budget like 50 Cent had, then I would be a rapper too. When I was in the music industry, the common thing is, if they play it, they will listen. The fact that they can't even get on the radio, their record labels aren't putting money behind them—Kanye is great because he made kind of a niche for himself. He—because he is controversial makes him popular and it is great. Common, he is still on the kind of underground tip, as they say he is getting more exposure but his record company doesn't put a lot of money behind him. Mos Def, the Roots, their record labels aren't supporting them like they are supporting the Young Jocks, Little Jeezy's and Little Waynes and all these, 50 Cent, all these other folks. They are not getting the same dollars and so it is all about marketing. If you can get on MTV—and MTV—Viacom sets the standards. It is at a point where if you get on BET or MTV, then radio will follow. You can look at Billboard and you can track it. It falls in line with each other, and it is not about sales.

Mr. RUSH. Well, you kind of explained to me—I always wondered what happened to Lauren Hill, she was one of my favorites and I just——

Ms. BEDIAKO. She is still out there.

Mr. RUSH. She is still out there? And Erika Badyu is?

Ms. BEDIAKO. Oh, yes, she is—Jill Scott——

Mr. RUSH. And India Arie, I understand that she is not promoted.

Ms. BEDIAKO. She is still out there. They are all still there and most of them realize that why should I be with a record label when they are not going to support me, I might as well go independent, and actually I would suggest that all artists go independent because they don't make money selling records. Record executives make money from these artists selling records. They make money from all their endorsement deals. The whole thing is, the record—they don't need the record industry. I worked with Scarface when I worked at Capitol EMI records and you know what? We never took him to radio. We didn't really have the Internet at that time, it was around 1995, and we always went to the club with his music. That is where it went. His music, quote, unquote, wasn't appropriate for radio because it is public airwaves and because we weren't in the heat of consolidation, record—I mean radio stations wouldn't play him, and you know what? He went gold and plati-

num every time. You do not need radio airplay to sell records. And he was doing it with clubs and name recognition, and now that you have the Internet, you don't—you can bypass all of this need to be on public airwaves.

Mr. RUSH. Dr. Dill, in your testimony you state that research on violent hip hop videos increases adversial sexual beliefs of both men and women and acceptance of relationship violence. How strong is this correlation? Is this in any way disputed by other research? You also state that research shows that violent music lyrics lead to more aggressive thoughts and feelings. Does this translate into some of the aberrant behavior that society is reeling from now in certain urban communities?

Ms. DILL. I would say a couple of things about that. First, the research on hip hop and video games as they evolve, there is less of that than there is research on other forms of media such as television and movies simply because they have been around for a longer period of time and I do think that as we are beginning to see changes in each media, we need to continue to watch what the effects of those forums is but yes, theoretically underlying all these different forms of media when you look at either stereotypical messages or you look at violent messages, it has been well documented over time and I think mainstream psychology, we don't dispute that there are—that there is a clear effect going on there. You asked me if people would dispute it. As I say, I don't think mainstream psychologists would but the industry seems to always be able to find someone out there who is a psychologist who will speak for their side. So I have learned in my career as a media psychologist that there is always controversy following it, but in my estimation, there is strong evidence out there of an important link between those factors.

Mr. RUSH. There seems to be a nexus between culture that you spoke to, and I agree with you, you can turn the television off but you can't turn the culture off. There seems to be a correlation between the culture of violence, degradation, misogyny, sexism and the drug culture. Is there a linkage? Have you looked at any linkage between the drug culture which leads to penitentiary culture that comes back out on the street? I mean, it seems like this is a cyclical kind of deterioration that we are engaged in as a society and as a community.

Ms. DILL. I haven't looked at drug culture per se. I know that people have analyzed rap music and found that to be a common theme along with criminality and sexuality as we have been talking about here today but I would underline that there is definitely a link between the stereotypical content and the aggressive content, and I noted today during the testimony of the artists that they called for the ability to express themselves but I think that is all part of a power dynamic that if you are in a marginalized group, you look for someone else who is below you on the hierarchy to marginalize in order to lift yourself up unfortunately so what we didn't hear in that discussion is, they want to express themselves but at the cost to what other groups, at the cost to black women in their communities, for example. So I think it really is about power and the drug factor may well be tied in to feelings of powerlessness, but as I say, I am not an expert on that aspect.

Mr. RUSH. Dr. Whiting, I am going to conclude. Discuss with the committee the issue of power and powerlessness as a dynamic in this whole hip hop degradation language that we are discussing and the images that we are discussing today.

Ms. SHARPLEY-WHITING. I think what Dr. Dill said is absolutely on point in terms of—and what I heard from the second panel, and what I consistently heard repeated—was this desire to express the turmoil, the degradation, the poverty in the community as a kind of artistic rap music. This is what is going on in our 'hood. But when the Congresswoman from Illinois asked well, what is the impact on women, the argument just kept coming back to what is going on in our 'hood and we need to do something about that, and what expressly came through was that women could be sacrificed as long as the larger, more important issue was laid out on the table—poverty, police brutality, drive-bys, et cetera, et cetera. What I have found is, or what I think is particularly fascinating is the ways in which, as I said, the cost to black women, to women in general. What we have to concede is that hip hop is a global phenomenon—it is multiracial and its impact is felt—it is pervasive as well as other forms of sexism and misogyny and so the culture of hip hop is certainly not alone. What I think is very interesting, what I saw coming through more than anything is as one is describing the deprivation and the degradation and the self-hate, et cetera, that is going on in various communities as a kind of rapping the reality or even fictionalizing or performing for the marketplace, what I think is more troubling is that if this is the way that women are being perceived or if this is the way that women's lives are being characterized in this music, then the lives of women and experiences of women in their communities is one that is quite devastating. And so if nothing else then, we will take the music as instructive and therefore we need to do something about the ways in which women are being treated in those communities. So if rapping one's reality means exposing the very forlorn experiences that women are undergoing in their communities, then we need to do something about that. Obviously young black women or girls are suffering a great deal in those communities.

And I want to kind of conclude as well by saying—getting back to kind of the b****, "ho" thing and the censorship thing, there is a song by DMX, and I have to say, DMX is a guilty pleasure for me, but there is a song by DMX and he says—he has a line in there, "If you have a daughter over 15, I'mma rape her." Now, one does not mention "b****" or "ho" or "n*****" in that line but one certainly describes something that is absolutely visceral and violent and troubling and so we have to get beyond the beats and the rhymes. We have to really think about what is going on in the music and how it is depicting people's lives, because if nothing else, as I said, it is instructive.

Mr. RUSH. To a certain extent, I am familiar and I am not shocked but I am flabbergasted, because in my community, I live in the 'hood. I live right next to a public housing development. I am right in the poorest community in the city of Chicago and I am there for a reason because I want to be there, and I know that there is a lot of pain that goes on. There is a lot of pain that goes on in relationships between male and female and it seems as

though from your testimony, it is a lot worse than we can imagine because of—and I am not trying to make any excuses for anybody but it seems to me like women are convenient targets for black men because they can't exercise their sense of dignity and power as vis-a-vis white men. They can't get to white men, so they will get to the person who is closest to them and that is their women, and until we start dealing with the issue of power relationships and get into instructing our young men but primarily our young women, I think that is where you start because they accept and they expect and they—some of them—and that is not to blame them—but they view it as being a mark or some kind of badge of courage or badge of acceptance to be ill treated and disrespected by men. I see it all the time when I look out my window and I can see young women having boys pulling all over them and cussing them and I just—I wanted to make sure that this committee addresses this issue, that this committee gives voice to this problem and all of its complexity as much as possible because I really want the members of this committee, myself included and everybody who participated and all those who have gathered here, I really want us to engage and become a part of the solution as opposed to being a part of the problem. This is a very serious issue that is not on most of the Congress's radar screen. We are never going to get called over to vote on this issue. Most committees would never undertaken a hearing based on these kind of issues but these are the kinds of issues that are tearing the fabric of our community apart and I really—again, I want to thank you all for participating and for being a part of this hearing and I thank you and I compliment you and I commend you for your noble work. We have got a long way to go and we also have a short time to get there.

Thank you very much, and the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:13 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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