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SURVEY: MORE LIKELY TO FIND AN ADULT WHO BELIEVES IN ALIEN ABDUCTIONS THAN A VOTER WHO WANTS THE FEDS TO PICK WHAT'S ON TV

Three-Fourths of Voters Don't Think the Government Should Spend Time Investigating a Show When Just One Complaint was Made

NEW YORK, March 29, 2006 — In a survey conducted just days after the Federal Communications Commission fined local broadcasters for airing content it deemed indecent, voters overwhelmingly rejected the notion that government should have a say in what they watch on TV. The nationwide survey, conducted March 24-26 by Russell Research, found that only twelve percent of American voters prefer that the government – and not individuals – decide what's appropriate for television. In fact, those who prefer government control are such a small minority that they're even outnumbered by the one-fifth of Americans who believe that alien abductions have taken place [Roper Poll, 2002].

"When more people believe in alien abductions than think the government should control what adults watch on TV," said Jim Dyke, Executive Director of TV Watch, "it puts efforts to have government control content in perspective."

According to the survey, three-fourths of voters said they would be upset if programming choices were limited because the government went too far in its attempt to control what's on television. That's a legitimate concern following the WB network announcement last week that it edited the premier broadcast of *The Bedford Diaries* out of fear of future FCC fines. Further, when asked if the government should make subjective decisions about the appropriateness of language, as it did in the cases of *Saving Private Ryan* and Martin Scorsese's *The Blues: Godfathers and Sons*, two-thirds of voters said the government should not decide.

"For too long, activists have gone unchallenged as they pressure the government to control content, even though their idea of control has very little public support," Mr. Dyke said.

Survey findings: Voters say they can, and should, regulate their own TV content

- 87 percent of voters agree that with TV ratings and parental controls, like the v-chip and cable and satellite blockers, every household can regulate its own TV viewing.
- 82 percent of voters prefer people exercising personal choice over what they watch on television. Only 12 percent prefer that the government regulate what is appropriate.

Survey findings: The interest groups who file complaints don't speak for everyone else

- While some people will always find something on TV that offends them, 87 percent of voters don't think the interests of a few should dictate what everyone else gets to watch on TV.
- Nearly three out of four [73%] voters think that a single complaint shouldn't be enough to make the government spend time investigating or fining a TV show that thousands of viewers enjoyed without complaining.

Survey findings: Regulators are not welcome in voters' living rooms

- More than three-fourths [76%] of voters say they would be upset if government regulation limited the programming choices available to them.

Survey findings: Playing parent or producer is a waste of the government's time

- The majority [64%] of voters agree that it's futile for government to fine network programs when the same or similar programming available on cable, satellite or the internet.
- Two-thirds [66%] of voters believe that the government should not make subjective decisions about when the use of explicit language is necessary, whether in educational or artistic programming, as was the case when the FCC reviewed *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Blues: Godfathers and Sons*.

Methodology

The telephone study was conducted by Russell Research from March 24 – 26, 2006 among 501 registered voters. The survey has a 4.4 percent margin of error.

About TV Watch

TV Watch was launched in May 2005 by a coalition of individuals and organizations concerned about the lack of education on existing parental control tools for TV and the impact of increased government control of TV. TV Watch consists of 27 prominent individuals and organizations representing more than 4 million Americans and more than 1,900 grassroots members.

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