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**New Group Opposing Government Control of TV Launched Today;  
TV Watch to Promote Use of “Parental Controls”**

*National Poll Shows TV Watch Speaks For Most Americans Who Support  
Personal Responsibility Over Government Control*

NEW YORK, May 4, 2005 — A new coalition called TV Watch that opposes government control of television programming and promotes the use of parental controls (which include program content ratings and blocking technologies) was launched today. Coalition members come from across the political spectrum and include legal scholars, media companies, authors, academic experts, entertainers and business leaders from around the country.

“The debate has been dominated by advocates of increased government control,” said Jim Dyke, executive director of TV Watch. “TV Watch speaks for most Americans who today are not represented in the debate over rising government regulation of television programming and who want to protect their favorite shows from censorship.”

Dyke added, “The only way to balance the public’s competing interests and values is for concerned viewers to use the ratings and other parental controls, and our mission is to help them do it.”

TV Watch released a national poll which shows that the public clearly prefers parental responsibility to government control. By a staggering *eight to one* ratio, respondents believe that “more parental involvement” is a better solution to keeping kids from seeing adult content than “increase [d] government control.” The complete findings of the national survey conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates and the Luntz Research Companies is available on the coalition website [www.televisionwatch.org](http://www.televisionwatch.org).

“When given a choice between government regulation and parental responsibility, Americans overwhelmingly choose parental responsibility and reject government control,” said Frank Luntz, Luntz Research Companies.

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TV Watch is founded on the premise that common sense, personal taste and personal values should dictate what content is viewed in an individual's home. Surveys show, however, that 50 percent of Americans are using the ratings, but few know they have parental controls like the v-chip and even fewer people actually use the available tools. "Clearly the process for educating parents and other viewers needs improvement," added Dyke.

Joe Pantoliano, actor and co-president of The Creative Coalition (a founding member organization of TV Watch) said, "I'm a typical American parent – I understand and use the ratings system when I'm helping my children make their viewing choices, and I sure don't want to compromise my parental responsibility by turning my children's television viewing choices over to the government." He continued, "The Creative Coalition represents arts and entertainment leaders – many of whom are parents first and foremost – and we are dedicated to working with TV Watch to ensure that more and better educational tools are made available to parents and caregivers, while at the same time preserving the very basic freedoms that the First Amendment provides for our children and their children."

According to the poll, by a nearly *four to one* ratio, Americans prefer personal responsibility to regulation. The poll backs findings from a recent public opinion survey by the Pew Research Centers that found that Americans felt undue government restrictions pose a greater danger than current TV programming.

"In a free society, different people will have different values and tolerance levels when it comes to speech, and government should not impose the will of some on all. To protect the First Amendment and our heritage of freedom of speech and expression from government encroachment, editorial discretion over content should be housed in private, not public, hands," said Adam Thierer, TV Watch member and senior fellow and director, Center for Digital Media Freedom at The Progress & Freedom Foundation.

### **Survey findings: Americans prefer to choose for themselves and their kids**

- 86 percent of Americans say more parental involvement is the best way to keep kids from seeing what they shouldn't see. 11 percent say the government should increase control and enforcement of network television programming.
- By nearly four to one, Americans say more government regulation is not the solution, personal responsibility is.
- 91 percent of Americans – and 80 percent of those who say they "often" see things they feel should not have been aired – say that "some people will always be able to find something on the television or radio that offends them. But the sensitivities of a few should not dictate the choices for everyone else."

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- Even among the most sensitive viewers, those who “often” find television content objectionable, 74 percent of respondents said they prefer “people exercising personal choice over what they watch on television,” and not “government regulation of what is appropriate.”

“Consumers know the impact that advocates of more government regulation are having on television programming. Important news and entertainment programming such as the World War II classic “Saving Private Ryan,” Iraq war documentaries and popular TV shows have been changed or not aired out of fear of government fines,” said Dyke.

### **Survey findings: People care about content**

- 45 percent of Americans said they have seen something in the last month during the day or early evening that they felt should not have been aired.
- Nearly 66 percent of Americans believe that recent events surrounding television are actually depriving them of content they want to see because of the TV industry’s’ reactions to indecency issues.

TV Watch member organizations include: American Conservative Union; Americans for Tax Reform; Center for Creative Voices in Media; The Creative Coalition; Media Freedom Project; The Media Institute; NBC Universal; News Corporation; SpeakSpeak; US Chamber of Commerce; and Viacom. Individual members include: Jack Balkin, Yale Law School; Braden Cox, Technology Counsel, Competitive Enterprise Institute; Susan Crawford, professor, Cardozo Law School; Nick Gillespie, editor-in-chief, *Reason* magazine; Jeff Jarvis, former television critic for TV Guide and People, creator of Entertainment Weekly, and blogger for BuzzMachine.com; Brian Murphy, adjunct professor, New York Law School and partner, Frankfurt Kurnit Klein \* Selz; Sal Severe, PhD, author of *How to Behave So Your Children Will Too*; Adam Thierer, senior fellow and director, Center for Digital Media Freedom at The Progress & Freedom Foundation; and Linda Gale White, former first lady of Texas.

For more information about TV Watch and its continuing efforts to build a grassroots coalition to advocate for personal responsibility over government intervention and educate Americans -- parents, politicians and regulators -- about tools to control TV content, visit [www.televisionwatch.org](http://www.televisionwatch.org).

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