

Weekly Report  
Week of 2-16

By: Sen. Matt Bartle  
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In recent weeks, we have all been shocked by the ever-increasing boldness with which the major networks and the out-of-touch entertainment industry have attacked any safe haven of decency on the television programs being broadcast into our living rooms. There was a day when the government did not need to concern itself with the content of television programs because even Hollywood and America's broadcast companies could be depended on to do the right thing. Those days are apparently gone. Now, not even during the hours of prime-time can a family sit down to watch a sporting event or a sitcom without being subjected to all sorts of sexual innuendo, or worse.

I am pleased to see that CBS has caught considerable heat from offended viewers for their part in the recent Super Bowl fiasco but I also believe that the federal government needs to come down hard on those who broadcast indecency. Only when the penalties for "pushing the envelope" are real and severe will TV start to clean up its act.

Below is a letter I recently sent to Michael Powell, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Cleaning up America's airwaves is the direct responsibility of the FCC.

February 10, 2004

Michael Powell  
Chairman, Federal Communication Commission  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Decency

Dear Chairman Powell,

Please implement some decency standards for both broadcast and cable television. PLEASE! I am particularly troubled by the commercials in sporting events. They are, by and large, pure garbage. Advertisers appear to have concluded that the only way to sell beer or other products to men is by tying those products to sex.

The decline in the years since President Bush has been in office has been dramatic. I, too, am a Republican. We can do better in this area. The people expect more from a Republican administration. I expect better. Even liberals are starting to take notice.

Take a bold stand. You came from one of America's leading families. Bold leadership is your pedigree. We so desperately need you to make your mark. Mr. Chairman, this is your defining moment. Take television back from the pornographers.

Sincerely,

Matt Bartle

Next week I'll discuss a bill I have filed to help defend our families from the assault on decency right here at home. This bill would prohibit sexually oriented billboards from being posted within one mile of a state highway.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at [matt\\_bartle@senate.state.mo.us](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.state.mo.us). Also, you can read any of the bills I file on my website at:

<http://www.senate.state.mo.us/04info/members/mem08.htm>). Thank you again for making it possible for me to serve in the Missouri Senate.