

**Commercial Alert**  
**1611 Connecticut Ave. NW Suite #3A**  
**Washington, DC 20009**  
**202.296.2787 Phone C 202.833.2406 Fax**  
**www.essential.org/alert C alert@essential.org**

May 3, 2000

President Bill Clinton  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, you are scheduled to conduct a televised "Webside Chat" on Primedia's Channel One, an in-school marketing company that promotes violent entertainment and other commercial fare to its captive audience of about eight million schoolchildren. Your appearance on Channel One is a tacit endorsement of that corporation's efforts to infuse the nation's classrooms with the degraded values of the commercial culture, violent entertainment included. We urge you to reconsider.

In recent months, for example, Primedia's Channel One has shown ads for violent movies such as Supernova, The Mummy and The World is Not Enough. It uses the public schools and the compulsory schooling laws to corral a captive audience of impressionable children for these commercial enticements.

Following the school shootings in Pearl, West Paducah, Jonesboro, Springfield and Littleton, many parents are worried about school violence. The last thing they expect is that the public schools will become amphitheaters for the promotion of violent movies.

Mr. President, you have rightly criticized the marketing of violence to our children, and have asked the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department to investigate it.

"We know we can prevent more youth violence if we work together," you said on June 1, 1999. "Of course, the responsibility begins at home. It must be reinforced and supported at schools..."

Channel One directly contradicts this effort. It uses the public classrooms to promote body obsession and materialism as well as violence, which are huge problems for children. Few parents send their kids to school each day with the hopes they will be subjected to such values.

It is not fitting for you, our nation's chief executive, to so publicly embrace this corruption of the purpose of the public schools. Please reconsider your appearance on Channel One, for the good of our children.

Sincerely,

Charles W. F. Bell, Programs Director, Consumers Union

Brita Butler-Wall, Chair, WA State PTA Committee on Commercial Influences on Children in Schools

Roy F. Fox, Assoc. Prof. of Eng. Ed. & Lit., U. of MO-Columbia; author, *Harvesting Minds*

George Gerbner, President and Founder, Cultural Environment Movement; Dean Emeritus, Annenberg School of Communication

Michael F. Jacobson, co-author, *Marketing Madness*

Diane Levin, Professor of Education, Wheelock College; author, *Remote Control Childhood*

Robert McChesney, Research Associate Professor, U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; author, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*

Jim Metrock, President, Obligation, Inc.

Mark Crispin Miller, Professor of Media Ecology, New York University

Gary Ruskin, Director, Commercial Alert

Phyllis Schlafly, President, Eagle Forum

Donald E. Wildmon, President, American Family Association