

# NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information Contact:  
Gary Ruskin (503) 235-8012

## **“Parents’ Bill Of Rights” Seeks to Restore Parents’ Control Over Commercial Influences on Their Children**

Commercial Alert today proposed a “Parents’ Bill of Rights” to help parents combat the commercial influences that prey upon their children and that promote products and values of which parents do not approve.

The nine provisions of the Parents’ Bill of Rights would help right the balance between parents and the commercial culture and would enable parents to reduce the role of the latter in their childrens' lives if they so choose.

The Parents’ Bill of Rights follows.

WHEREAS, the nurturing of character and strong values in children is one of the most important functions of any society;

WHEREAS, the primary responsibility for the upbringing of children resides in their parents;

WHEREAS, an aggressive commercial culture has invaded the relationship between parents and children, and has impeded the ability of parents to guide the upbringing of their own children;

WHEREAS, corporate marketers have sought increasingly to bypass parents, and speak directly to children in order to tempt them with the most sophisticated tools that advertising executives, market researchers and psychologists can devise;

WHEREAS, these marketers tend to glorify materialism, addiction, hedonism, violence and anti-social behavior, all of which are abhorrent to most parents;

WHEREAS, parents find themselves locked in constant battle with this pervasive influence, and are hard pressed to keep the commercial culture and its degraded values out of their children’s lives;

WHEREAS, the aim of this corporate marketing is to turn children into agents of corporations in the home, so that they will nag their parents for the things they see advertised, thus sowing strife, stress and misery in the family;

WHEREAS, the products advertised generally are ones parents themselves would not choose for their children: violent and sexually suggestive entertainment, video games, alcohol, tobacco, gambling and junk food;

WHEREAS, this aggressive commercial influence has contributed to an epidemic of marketing-related diseases in children, such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, alcoholism, anorexia and bulimia, while millions will eventually die from the marketing of tobacco;

WHEREAS, corporations have latched onto the schools and compulsory school laws as a way to bypass parents and market their products and values to a captive audience of impressionable and trusting children;

WHEREAS, these corporations ultimately are creatures of state law, and it is intolerable that they should use the rights and powers so granted for the purpose of undermining the authority of parents in these ways;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the U.S. Congress and the fifty state legislatures should right the balance between parents and corporations and restore to parents some measure of control over the commercial influences on their children, by enacting this Parents' Bill of Rights, including,

**Leave Children Alone Act.** This act bans television advertising aimed at children under 12 years of age. (federal)

**Child Privacy Act.** This act restores to parents the ability to safeguard the privacy of their own children. It gives parents the right to control any commercial use of personal information concerning their children, and the right to know precisely how such information is used. (federal, state)

**Children's Advertising Subsidy Revocation Act.** It is intolerable that the federal government actually rewards corporations with a big tax write-off for the money they spend on psychologists, market researchers, ad agencies, media and the like in their campaigns to instill their values in our children. This act eliminates all federal subsidies, deductions and preferences for advertising aimed at children under 12 years of age. (federal)

**Advertising to Children Accountability Act.** This act helps parents affix individual responsibility for attempts to subject their children to commercial influence. It requires corporations to disclose who created each of their advertisements, and who did the market research for each ad directed at children under 12 years of age. (federal)

**Commercial-Free Schools Act.** Corporations have turned the public schools into advertising free-fire zones. This act prohibits corporations from using the schools and compulsory school laws to bypass parents and pitch their products to impressionable schoolchildren. (federal, state)

**Product Placement Disclosure Act.** This law gives parents more information with which to monitor the influences that prey upon their children through the media. Specifically, it requires corporations to disclose, on packaging and at the outset, any and all product placements on television and videos, and in movies, video games and books. This prevents advertisers from sneaking ads into media that parents assume to be ad-free. (federal)

**Child Harm Disclosure Act.** Parents have a right to know of any significant health effects of

products they might purchase for their children. This act creates a legal duty for corporations to publicly disclose all information suggesting that their product(s) could substantially harm the health of children. (federal)

**Fairness Doctrine for Parents.** This act provides parents with the opportunity to talk back to the media and the advertisers. It makes the Fairness Doctrine apply to all advertising to children under 12 years of age, providing parents and community with response time on broadcast TV and radio for advertising to children. (federal)

**Children's Food Labeling Act.** Parents have a right to information about the food that corporations push upon their children. This act requires fast food restaurant chains to label contents of food, and provide basic nutritional information about it. (federal)

<-----Parents' Bill of Rights ends here----->

Commercial Alert's mission is to keep the commercial culture within its proper sphere, and to prevent it from exploiting children and subverting the higher values of family, community, environmental integrity and democracy. Commercial Alert has more than 1,500 members representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia. For more information, see our website at <<http://www.commercialalert.org>>.

The text of the Parents' Bill of Rights is available at <<http://www.commercialalert.org/pbor.pdf>>.