

TARGETING CHILDREN

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I want to draw the attention of this body to a report that was released just today by the Federal Trade Commission. It is a followup study to one that was done last year on the issue of the marketing of violent, adult-rated entertainment material to children. It was a groundbreaking Federal Trade Commission study last year that found that much of our adult material, adult-rated entertainment material—movies, video games, music—was adult rated by the companies themselves, entertainment companies, the conglomerates, and then target-marketed back to children, for example, in the Joe Camel advertisement. It was said this was an adult-rated product, cigarettes, but using an image to target-market that then back to children. It turns out the entertainment community—entertainment companies and movies and music and video games—was doing the exact same thing.

That report was released last fall, and it was very discouraging and disappointing that they would do this, particularly at a time when we have so much difficulty with violence in our society, violence among kids in our schools, killings among our teenagers.

There was a followup study released just today to that September FTC study. What came forward is that the movie industry is doing somewhat better about not target-marketing the adult-rated material to children, the video game industry is doing better than the movie industry in not target-marketing their adult-rated fare to children, and the music industry that is putting forward these hyperviolent, suicide, violence-towards-women lyrics has actually done nothing to change its marketing practice and continues to directly target-market adult-rated material. This is material the music companies themselves deem to be inappropriate for children. They put an adult sticker, parental advisory, on this material, and they turn around and continue, with millions of dollars in marketing campaigns, to target children.

They are saying: Yes, we got the study last fall. We saw that. Yes, we were target-marketing adult-rated, parental-advisory-stickered material to children last fall. Do you know what. We are going to keep doing it. And they have continued to do that, as shown in this study that was just released today.

I asked that industry to come forward and change its marketing practices: If you believe this material is inappropriate, to the point it needs a parental advisory label on it, don't spend millions of dollars to try to bypass parents and get the kids to buy them.

What the FTC study found is deeply disappointing. There have been some efforts made at progress, mostly, as I noted, in the video game industry, and more modest attempts in the movie industry. For those efforts I offer both praise and encouragement to step up

the progress. But the report also found, as I stated, that the recording industry has made no effort to implement any reforms—either those mentioned in the report or the reforms that they, the recording industry themselves, told Congress they would do. This is even more disappointing.

Before we had the hearing last fall on the marketing of violent material to children, the recording industry stepped up and said: We are going to change. Here is a three-point, five-point, seven-point plan we are putting forward; we will implement these as an industry to change our marketing practices.

They volunteered. Now what they have done is they have said: We are not even going to do what we volunteered to Congress we would do—change our marketing practices.

I want to read just a few statements from this report because it is deeply disturbing:

The Commission's review indicates that the entertainment industry had made some progress in limiting advertising in certain teen media and providing rating information in advertising. The industry must make a greater effort, however, if it is to meet the suggestions for improvement included in the Commission's Report as well as its own promises for reform.

Specifically, the report found, "ads for R-rated movies still appeared on the television programs most popular with teens . . ."—even though they are supposed to be a restricted audience for the movie—"and the ratings reasons in ads were either small, fleeting or inconspicuously placed."

That was the good part of the study. The report reserved its harshest criticism for the music industry and stated:

The Commission found that the music recording industry, unlike the motion picture and electronic game industries, has not visibly responded to the Commission's report, nor has it implemented the reforms its trade association announced just before the Commission issued its report. The Commission's review showed that advertising for explicit-content labeled music recordings routinely appeared on popular teen television programming. All five major recording companies placed advertising for explicit content music on TV programs and magazines with substantial under-17 audiences. Furthermore, ads for explicit-content labeled music usually did not indicate that the recording was stickered with a parental advisory label.

So not only did they market to kids, they didn't warn the parents in the advertising that this was parental labeled material. In the advertising, they said they were not even going to point that out to the parents.

If you refer back to the original FTC report released last September, you will find 100 percent of the violent music they studied was target-marketed to kids—100 percent. Evidently the recording industry saw no reason to change.

Soon the Senate will turn its attention to consider the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA, and how to provide the best education for all of America's children. I think for

every Senator of both parties, ensuring that America's children get a world-class education is a top priority.

We also know one of the best measures of what a child learns is time on task; that is, children learn what they spend their time focusing on. That is significant because typically the American child spends more time each year watching television and movies, playing video games, listening to music, than he or she does in school. It makes no sense to assume that what a child sees, hears, and does in school will mold, shape, and enlighten his or her young mind but that what he sees, hears, and plays in terms of entertainment will have no impact whatsoever.

Many of the most popular songs, games, and movies actively glorify violence and glamorize brutality. There are video games which cast players as drug kingpins, with the game revolving around selling drugs and killing competitors. There are movies which glamorize murder, casting teen idols as dashing killers. And there are numerous songs which celebrate violence against women—all of which are marketed to children.

If being perceived is doing, we clearly have problems on our hands.

There is new evidence to suggest that exposing children to violent entertainment not only affects their emotional and behavioral development—their sensitivity to other's pain, their ability to empathize, and their perceptions of the world around them—but also their cognitive development. A professor in my alma mater of Kansas State has done groundbreaking research on the impact that exposure to violent entertainment has on children's brain activity. Dr. John Murray's studies have found that in terms of brain activity, kids who are exposed to violent entertainment have a similar experience to those who are exposed to real-life trauma, and their brain responds in much the same fashion.

This research, while still in its rudimentary stages, has potentially profound implications for education. I would therefore like to announce my intention to introduce an amendment to ESEA which calls for increased research into the impact that exposing children to violent entertainment—violent music, and violent video games—has on their cognitive development and educational achievement. I hope and trust that the Senate will adopt this amendment.

In conclusion, I urge my colleagues to look at this interim study by the FCC and what has happened.

I also urge the recording industry to step up and actually do what they said they would do, which is not to market adult-rated material and parental advisory material directly to children. It is harming our kids. It is the wrong thing to do. I ask them sincerely to review what they are doing in their marketing campaigns and stop this practice. It is harmful.

I am hopeful when we have the followup study and the anniversary report

to the FCC study this fall that the recording industry will actually step forward and do what is right.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to yield myself up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire pertaining to the introduction of S. 759 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I would like to address the Chamber. May I ask, what is the business before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in a period of morning business for 3 hours, equally divided.

Mr. DODD. Is there a limitation on the amount of time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is a 10-minute limitation.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I want to spend a couple of minutes, if I can, talking about the possibility of us debating and passing a comprehensive bill on elementary and secondary education. My hope is, of course, that in the coming days this body will do what it should have done 2 years ago; that is, to pass legislation, as we are required to do only once every 5 or 6 years, on elementary and secondary education.

This morning across America 55 million children went to school. Fifty million went to school in a public school; 5 million went to school in a private or parochial school. We, as President Bush has said, bear a principal responsibility to the education of all our children, but a particular responsibility to children in our public schools, and even further, from a Federal standpoint, a particular obligation to the most disadvantaged children across America.

That has been our historic participation, to try to assist our communities, our States, and most particularly families in this country who suffer from various depravations, to see to it that their children have an equal opportunity to success. We have no obligation, in my view, to guarantee anybody success in America. But we do bear responsibility to try to provide an equal opportunity to achieving success. That is all really any of us can try to accomplish in our public responsibilities.

So the Elementary and Secondary Education Act historically over the years has been an effort by the Federal Government to assist and participate in the improvement of the quality of public education in the United States. For every dollar of education that is spent by our public sectors—State, local governments, and the Federal Government—out of every dollar that is spent, the Federal Government spends about 6 to 8 cents. And 93, 94 cents of the dollar spent on elementary and secondary education comes from local property taxes in most States. I do not know what Oklahoma does, but I know in Connecticut it is mostly a local property tax. The State also contributes, but primarily it is local property taxes. So the Federal Government's participation financially is rather small when you think of it. Out of a dollar spent, we contribute about 6 or 7 cents.

I am not going to debate this point right now, or discuss this point, but I happen to believe in the 21st century the Federal Government ought to be a better partner financially. I would like to see us become someday a one-third partner—the States one-third, the local government one-third, and the National Government one-third. What a wonderful relief it would be—and I saw the Presiding Officer nod affirmatively when I spoke of property taxes in Oklahoma, as is the case in Connecticut—what a great relief it would be, putting aside education issues, if we could say to people in Oklahoma and Connecticut: We are going to reduce your local property taxes by a third—that is where most of it goes, to education—because your Federal Government is going to step up and be a far greater participant in recognizing the national benefits we all accumulate if the quality of public education in this country improves. So that is what brings us to this particular point.

There has been a lot of discussion about whether or not we have some agreements between the White House and the Senate on an Elementary and Secondary Education Act. There has been some progress. But we are light-years away from an agreement—light-years away from an agreement.

I do not say that with any glee. I had hoped after 2 or 3 weeks of discussions we would be a lot closer. But reports I have read in the newspaper and heard in the press and heard from the White House, heard from some quarters here, that we are on the brink of some agreement, is very far from the truth. I think it is a sad commentary, but it happens to be a fact. Let me tell you why.

First of all, we are asking schools to do some very dramatic things—testing, for one.

I am not terribly enthusiastic about testing as the only means of judging performance. Testing is really not a reform; it is a measurement of how well one does. That is all. As an educator in my State recently said: When children

have a fever, taking their temperature three times an hour is not going to make them feel better; medicine will. Testing every year in and year out is inclined, in my view, to turn our schools into nothing more than test prep centers across America.

Who is going to pay for that unfunded mandate if we jam that down the throats of communities across the country? I am very concerned with this mandatory testing idea as the only way to judge how students are performing.

Many look to our schools as the source of the kids' problems when, in fact, in my view, the problems begin before the kids ever get to school. The problems too often are occurring at home. We do not want to look in the mirror and see what is happening in our own homes long before this child enters kindergarten or the first grade. We now blame child care centers. We blame the kindergarten teacher, the first, second, third, fourth, or fifth grade teacher because Johnny cannot read or Johnny is not performing well.

As I said, too often the problems occur long before a child reaches school age or enters a child care center. We need to be a bit more realistic about what we can expect by testing kids all the time, at some significant cost, as a mandate.

Accountability standards have been improved. I am willing to support some of those. These are the same accountability standards that have been developed, frankly, over the last few years. JEFF BINGAMAN, my colleague from New Mexico, has been the principal author of legislation to improve accountability standards that will get us closer to a better way of getting schools to live up to the obligations they bear for their students and families who send their children to these schools.

Today's children are part of the first generation that is being raised in a truly global world. Nothing we do this year or in the coming years is more important than how we go about providing for our children's education. If we succeed in this endeavor, our country's future will be very bright. If we do not succeed, it is going to be bleak.

With that in mind, I believe we have much work to do as we prepare to take up the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. If this debate turns out to be a feeding frenzy with literally dozens and dozens of amendments being proposed every 5 minutes, with Members having little knowledge of what they may do, we do not know what we are going to produce.

Since we only deal with this once every 5 or 6 years, we ought to take some time and pull this together and come forward with a bill that truly recognizes and reflects bipartisanship, that includes the ideas of people who spend a lot of time thinking about how to improve the quality of education in our country, rather than one that is a jump ball that could end up doing a lot more damage despite the press releases