

NETS ADOPT VIOLENCE CODE

By Randy Sukow

ABC, CBS, and NBC agreed last week on 15 broadly worded standards to reduce programs of "gratuitous" or "excessive" violence and scenes that "depict violence as glamorous."

"A free society can solve its problems without government censorship. We are moving toward a solution," said Senate Judiciary Committee member Paul Simon (D-Ill.), sponsor of the 1990 Television Violence Act, at a Friday (Dec. 11) press conference in Washington. Simon said network representatives assured him the effects of the guidelines "should be evident" in fall 1993 programming.

The 1990 act gave the broadcast and cable industries a three-year anti-trust exemption to develop violence guidelines. That exemption expires at the end of 1993. The networks also agreed to organize an industrywide TV violence conference in Los Angeles this spring and to invite program producers, cable programmers and independent TV stations to participate. The Motion Picture Association of America accepted the invitation.

Simon refused to speculate on what Congress may do if the cable industry does not approve similar standards, but was optimistic that cable would act. In fact, cable programmers were more cooperative than the broadcast networks during the drafting of the Violence Act, he said.

But House Crime and Criminal Justice Subcommittee Chairman Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) was less optimistic. Schumer was annoyed that the two most influential cable channel owners, Time Warner and Viacom, declined to appear at a hearing on television violence and teen crime scheduled for Dec. 15 in New York. "If they don't show up, they've got something to hide and they cannot defend their position," he said.

The National Cable Television Association says it will submit a written statement to Schumer before the hearing and that Dr. George Gerbner of the University of Pennsylvania, one of the witnesses for tomorrow's hearing, is researching TV violence for an NCTA-commissioned study. ■

NEW YEAR UNDER FIN-SYN / 4

Although the rules stand a good chance of being relaxed or eliminated, fin-syn restrictions still govern the networks as they negotiate for a new season.

DILLER'S HOME SHOPPING / 14, 50

Former Fox chairman Barry Diller emerged in the home-shopping market last week, acquiring a stake in QVC and fueling the speculation that industry suitors plan a merger between QVC and Home Shopping Network.

SPECIAL REPORT: TALK SHOWS / 22

The number of TV talk strips on the air—now totaling 16—is expected to hit two dozen by next season, and a BROADCASTING Special Report looks at the status of the genre and some of the upcoming projects.

END OF 'CHEERS' / 39

Rather than wait for last call, NBC's highly rated *Cheers* will leave the air "while it's still fun and creative," the show's producer, studio and stars decided last week.

CABLE SUPPLIER STOCKS CLIMB / 51

Cable company commitments to fiber-optic and digital-compression upgrades have created a bull market in equipment-manufacturer stocks.

OWNER'S NEW PHILOSOPHY / 54

Radio group owner



Dozen new talk strips in works to join top-ranked 'Oprah' (p. 22)

Bill Phalen has re-entered the station-trading market with "a retailer's mentality," which means calculating ad rates not with Arbitron numbers but with demand pricing.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CLINTON / 56

Recommendations on telecommunications issues by the Progressive Policy Institute, a think tank with the ear of President-elect



Quits for 'Cheers' (p. 39)

Clinton, include a national discussion of TV's impact on families.

COURT DATE FOR MUST CARRY / 62

A three-judge panel formed to review the 1992 Cable Act scheduled oral arguments on must-carry challenges for March 4 and put enforcement of the must-carry provision for noncommercial stations on hold.

COMPRESSION PLUS THREE / 64

A cable modulation scheme from Zenith Electronics offers the possibility of squeezing nine signals, rather than six, per channel.

MONEY PICTURE AT ABC / 66

In spite of good ratings results for the network, a weak revenue picture is holding down profit growth for the near term, Capacities/ABC President and CEO Dan Burke told the PaineWebber media conference in New York last week.

NEWS DEPARTMENTS

Business	66
Cable	50
Radio	54
Technology	64
Television	39
Top of the Week	4
Washington	56

FEATURE SECTIONS

Cable Rereg.....	63
Changing Hands.....	67
Closed Circuit.....	18
Datebook	74
Editorials.....	86
Fates & Fortunes.....	80
Fifth Estater	83
For the Record.....	75
In Brief.....	84
Monday Memo.....	19
Ratings Week	47
Special Report.....	22
Washington Watch	58