

September 24, 2007

The Honorable Bobby L. Rush, Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade,
and Consumer Protection
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6115

RE: Submission for hearing on Sept. 25, 2007: "From Imus to Industry: The Business of Stereotypes and Degrading Images"

Dear Chairman Rush,

The Media Institute wishes to submit the attached paper entitled "Television Violence and Aggression: Setting the Record Straight" by Jonathan L. Freedman, Ph.D. We ask that this paper be made a part of the record in the above-captioned hearing.

We believe that this paper will be of interest to the Subcommittee because it addresses the central issue of causation, *i.e.*, does media content actually cause persons who see or hear that content to engage in violent behavior.

Professor Freedman has conducted exhaustive reviews of the social science literature in the related area of television violence and behavior, and is recognized as an authority on this subject. He has concluded that the research evidence in the TV violence context is inconclusive or far too weak to prove a causal relationship between violent television images and violent behavior in children. (His recent research on video games and violent behavior also reaches the same conclusion, although that work is not addressed in the attached paper.)

Professor Freedman's findings may well be instructive as the Subcommittee examines the relationship, if any, between music and behavior. Media critics often are quick to embrace flawed studies, or to invoke a "common sense" argument, to "prove" that media content causes violent behavior. The issue is far from that simple, and much more equivocal.

The Honorable Bobby L. Rush
September 24, 2007
Page 2

We hope that the attached paper by Professor Freedman is helpful to the Subcommittee in illuminating the causation issue, and in encouraging a cautionary approach to any claims that music lyrics actually cause violent or inappropriate behavior among listeners.

Sincerely,

/s/

Patrick D. Maines
President

/s/

Richard T. Kaplar
Vice President

Attachment