



# Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1993

AT  
(202) 616-2771

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WILL NOT CHALLENGE EXTENSION  
OF VOLUNTARY PROGRAM ADDRESSING TELEVISION VIOLENCE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Department of Justice's Antitrust Division said today it will not challenge a proposal by the Association of Independent Television Stations to continue a voluntary program of guidelines and viewer advisories for independent television stations in an effort to reduce the negative impact of violence on television.

The proposal would allow the association to continue the effort it initiated with the enactment of the Television Program Improvement Act of 1990, which granted a three year antitrust exemption for joint activities to develop and disseminate voluntary guidelines to address television violence. That exemption expired December 1, 1993.

Assistant Attorney General Anne K. Bingaman, in charge of the Antitrust Division, said the proposed activities are unlikely to be anticompetitive. The program will provide television viewers--particularly parents--and advertisers with valuable information that can enhance the demand for the industry's products, she said.

(MORE)

The Department's position was stated in a business review letter from Bingaman to the association's president. The association is comprised of about 100 independent television stations throughout the country.

The proposal would allow the association and its members to discuss, collect and disseminate information on the effect of the guidelines program and to coordinate the production of a series of antiviolence messages.

The letter noted that the association's program is voluntary and no joint activity is intended to result in the boycott of any person. No station is required to adopt any policy, engage in any discussion or provide any information. Each independent station would continue to make its own program selection and editorial decisions.

Bingaman said the activities could be compared with the traditional practice of an industry agreeing on standards, a process that does not necessarily restrain competition and may have significant procompetitive benefits.

A file containing the business review request and the Department's response may be examined in the Legal Procedure Unit of the Antitrust Division, Room 3235, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20530. After a 30-day waiting period, the documents supporting the business review will be added to the file.

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