

Violence—Movie Ratings

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**PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES NATIONAL AGREEMENT
BY MOVIE THEATRE OWNERS TO REQUIRE PHOTO IDENTIFICATION
FOR "R" RATED MOVIES**

June 8, 1999

Today, the President joined leaders of the National Association of Theatre Owners in announcing a new nationwide movie ratings enforcement and educational effort. The three-part plan announced today includes: (1) a new national policy under which movie theatre owners will require photo identification for young people seeking admission to "R" rated films; (2) an educational outreach program for parents about the ratings system and the new ID-check policy; and (3) support by the theatre owners for a national study on the causes of violence. The National Association of Theatre Owners is a national trade association that represents 65% of the motion picture screens in the United States, with over 20,000 screens located in every state. The President also reiterated his call on Congress to move quickly and pass common sense gun legislation.

Requiring Photo Identification for "R" Rated Movies

The movie rating system, adopted by the Motion Picture Association of America in 1968, can be a useful tool for parents, but only if its main restrictive rating -- "R" (for "Restricted: Under 17 Requires Accompanying Parent or Adult Guardian") -- is effectively enforced. Under the policy announced today, the theatre owners' association states that from now on, "all of its members should require photo identification at the box office of young patrons not accompanied by a parent or guardian seeking admission to "R" rated films." The association also will ask theatre owners to post notices reflecting the "R" rated admission policy. The announcement of today's new policy came after a meeting between President Clinton and the association's president, William Kartoizian; its chairman, Barrie Lawson Locks; and theatre executives Greg Dunn of Regal Cinemas and J. Wayne Anderson of R/C Theatres Management.

The President challenged the theatre owners to strengthen enforcement of movie ratings in his May 15 radio address. Today he also repeated his challenge to the movie industry to reevaluate its entire ratings systems, especially the PG-13 rating, to determine whether it is allowing too much gratuitous violence in movies approved for viewing by children. The President has urged the entertainment industry to take other responsible steps, including calling on the videogame, recording and movie industries not to market violence to children. Last week, the President announced a joint study of entertainment industry marketing by the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department.

Reaching Out to Parents

The theatre owners also announced a national community education effort in conjunction with parent and religious organizations. The educational outreach will work to develop additional programs designed to enhance the ability of parents to make informed choices about which movies are appropriate for their children. As part of the new policy, the theatre association also called for a national study of youth violence. The President announced at the

White House Strategy Session on Children, Violence, and Responsibility that the Surgeon General would issue a report on youth violence next year.

Challenging the House to Pass Common Sense Gun Legislation

The President once again challenged the House of Representatives to pass common sense gun legislation without loopholes and without further delay. In May, the Senate passed tough new provisions to close the gun show loophole, require child safety locks with every new handgun sold, ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, and prohibit violent juveniles from owning guns as adults. The President called on the House to strengthen -- not weaken -- the Senate-passed bill, to include provisions to raise the age of handgun possession from 18 to 21 and require background checks for explosives purchases. The President also reiterated his commitment to expose and fight against any effort by the gun lobby to riddle the House bill with dangerous new loopholes and water down critical safety measures passed in the Senate.

**Q&A ON NATIONAL
MOVIE RATINGS ENFORCEMENT
June 8, 1999**

Q: What did the President announce today?

A: The President announced the commitment of the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) to a movie ratings enforcement and educational campaign. The three-part plan announced by NATO includes: (1) a new national policy under which movie theatre owners will require photo identification for young people seeking admission to "R" rated films; (2) an education outreach program for parents about the ratings system and the new ID-check policy; and (3) support by the theatre owners for a national study on the causes of violence. The President also reiterated his call on the Congress to move quickly and pass common sense gun legislation.

Q: How does the "R" rating currently work?

A: The "R" rating means "Restricted." The movie rating system currently requires that patrons seeking admission to "R" rated films be seventeen years of age, or be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Q: What is NATO?

A: NATO is the National Association of Theatre Owners, a national trade association that represents 65 percent of the motion picture screens in the United States, with over 20,000 screens located in all fifty states.

Q: When has the President called for ratings to be enforced in the past?

A: The President has called for enforcing the movie ratings system several times in the past few weeks, most notably on June 1 when he called for the joint Federal Trade Commission and Department of Justice study on the extent to which the video game, music, and movie industries market violence to children; on May 23 in his commencement address to Grambling State University; and on May 15 in his radio address where he challenged the entertainment industry to do its part.

Q: Why don't theatre owners card already?

A: The movie rating system is a voluntary system sponsored by NATO and the Motion Picture Association of America to provide parents with advance information on films, enabling the

parent to make judgments on movies they want or do not want their children to see. While individual theatre owners may have required photo identification for "R" rated movies in the past, NATO has never before required it of all of its members.

Q: NATO only covers 65 percent of movie screens. What about the other 35 percent?

A: While receiving the commitment of NATO which represents 65 percent of theatre screens is a good first step, the Administration challenges the remaining 35 percent to follow the lead of NATO and require photo identification at the box office for young patrons not accompanied by a parent or guardian seeking admission to "R" rated films.

Q: What other challenges has the President taken to protect our young people from media violence?

A: The President has emphasized that all of us must work together and accept responsibility for the safety of our children – in our schools and our communities. And that means there is more for each of us to do at home and at school, in Hollywood and in the heartland and here in Washington.

First and most fundamentally, the President has urged that we do more to help parents fulfill their most important responsibilities -- those to their children. Challenging parents to turn off the television or use the V-Chip to block inappropriate programming; to use the new tools to keep an eye on the computer screen; and to refuse to buy products that glorify violence.

The President also has called on the media and entertainment industries for their participation as well. Studies indicate that there is an adverse impact on our culture and our children if there is too much violence coming out of what they see and experience. So the President has challenged the people who produce these things to consider the consequences of them – whether it's a violent movie, a CD, a video game. First, the President has challenged the whole industry to stop showing guns in any ads or previews children might see. Second, he challenged theatre and video store owners to enforce more strictly the rating systems on the movies they show, rent, and sell – a challenge that the theatre owners today have accepted. Thirdly, the President has challenged the movie industry to reevaluate its entire ratings systems, especially the PG rating, to determine whether it is allowing too much gratuitous violence in movies approved for viewing by children. Finally, as noted earlier, the President has called on the FTC and the Justice Department to study the marketing of violence to children.