

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

CULTURE COUNTS & "SHAME IS A POWERFUL TOOL"; DOLE APPLAUDS NEW AD CAMPAIGN TO HOLD INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABLE FOR HARMFUL CULTURAL MESSAGES

This weekend, an important advertisement will be appearing on our television screens. The ad will feature two prominent Americans--Dr. William Bennett and C. Delores Tucker, Chair of the National Political Congress of Black Women.

Dr. Bennett is a Republican. Ms. Tucker is a Democrat. Both agree that the entertainment industry must be held accountable for the mindless violence and loveless sex it serves up each day to our children.

Of course, there are many fine people in the entertainment industry and there are many fine movies, songs, and television shows. And, thankfully, it appears that Hollywood is finally beginning to understand that "family-friendly" films can also be box office hits.

That's the good news.

The bad news is that too much of today's entertainment continues to operate in a moral vacuum, without a redeeming hope, and without any suggestion that virtues are important, that morality is, in fact, preferable to immorality.

We cannot ignore this simple truth: culture does count.

Cultural messages can and do bore deep into the hearts and the minds of our impressionable young. And when these messages are negative ones--repeated hour after hour, day after day, month after month--they can rob our children of that most precious gift of all: their innocence.

Time-Warner, Interscope Records & the Misogyny Business

One of the leading cultural influences in America today happens to be one of our largest corporations, Time-Warner.

Now, Time-Warner has produced much entertainment over the years that has enriched the cultural life of our country. But unfortunately, through its affiliation with companies like Interscope Records, Time-Warner is now on the cutting-edge of the misogyny business. As Ms. Tucker will explain in her television ad, and I quote: "Time-Warner's music division promotes music that celebrates the rape, torture, and murder of women. The lyrics are vulgar, offensive, and do terrible harm to our children."

Columnist John Leo puts it another way. He calls Time-Warner's affiliation with Interscope the "cultural equivalent of owning half the world's mustard gas factories."

Last month, I urged all Americans to join with me in refocusing the spotlight on the entertainment industry. I said that "shame is a powerful tool and we should use it." So, it is gratifying to see two concerned Americans, with different backgrounds and different political views, joining forces to put some much-deserved public heat on one of the giants of the entertainment industry.

Government Censorship Not the Answer

Let's also be very clear that government censorship is not the answer. We have more to fear than to gain from putting Washington in charge of our culture.

But just as Time-Warner has the "right" to produce and sell its harmful wares, concerned Americans like Bill Bennett and Delores Tucker also have the right to call upon the executives of Time-Warner to think less about short-term profit and more about the long-term good of their country.

So, I want to congratulate Dr. Bennett and Ms. Tucker for taking this initiative. I know that Dr. Bennett cites "courage" as one of the great virtues in his great Book of Virtues. And with this bold advertising campaign, he has proven that courage and good citizenship are alive and well in America today.

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* remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 12:05 PM.