



Dear Corporate/Ad Agency Leader:

As you know, advertising is now commonplace in the public schools. Yet, many advertising and marketing professionals have deep misgivings about marketing to school children. According to a 2004 Harris poll of youth advertising and marketing professionals, only 45% “feel that today’s young people can handle advertising in schools.” Not surprisingly, 47% believe that “schools should be a protected area” and that “there should not be advertising to students on school grounds.”

We are writing to ask for your help to turn your industry’s conscience into a reality, and to protect our children and their education from aggressive marketers.

Channel One is a highly controversial in-school marketing company that delivers televised content to nearly 11,500 schools throughout the nation. In exchange for video equipment, these schools now spend one full school week each year watching television, including one full school day just for the ads. According to the Harris poll, 61% of youth marketing professionals believe that it is “inappropriate” for companies like Channel One to “provid[e] instructional material that integrates brand names and products into the lessons.”

BusRadio is the newest foray of advertisers into public schools. It seeks to install special radio equipment into school buses that will carry that company’s offerings, including eight minutes of ads per hour. In its contract with school districts, BusRadio does not rule out advertising any particular type of products. If Channel One is any guide, we might expect BusRadio to advertise junk food, soda pop, violent and sexualized entertainment, and movies that encourage school children to smoke tobacco.

Whatever BusRadio advertises, children as young as six will have no choice as to whether to listen or not. Nor will their parents be able to exercise any control over their children’s exposure. The sales pitches will fill the bus and interfere with those children who want to read, study, talk, pray, or do almost anything else other than listen to the programming. According to the Harris poll, 69% of youth advertising and marketing professionals believe that “advertising on school buses” is “inappropriate.”

We agree with these professionals. We believe it is wrong for a company to use compulsory school attendance laws to force a captive audience of children to listen to advertising. As most practitioners in the field recognize, successful advertising depends on the willing participation of both advertiser and consumer. BusRadio and Channel One violate this fundamental principle.

We are asking your [company/agency] to pledge by October 15 not to buy advertising on BusRadio or Channel One. We hope you will join with us and affirm that school children should not be compelled to listen to or watch advertising.

We will follow up with you in the next two weeks about whether your [company/agency] will make this pledge. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss at your convenience the issues in this letter. Please feel free to call Jim Metrock of Obligation, Inc. at (205) 822-0080, Gary Ruskin of Commercial Alert at (503) 235-8012, or Monique Tilford of the Center for a New American Dream at (301) 891-3683. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Action Coalition for Media Education  
Alliance for Childhood  
American Family Association  
California Center for Public Health Advocacy  
Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood  
Center for a New American Dream  
Center for Community and Corporate Ethics  
Center for Ecoliteracy  
Center for Food & Justice, UEPI, Occidental College  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Center for Screen-Time Awareness  
Children Now  
Children's Health Environmental Coalition  
Coalition for Commercial-Free Schools  
Concerned Women for America  
Commercial Alert  
Consumer Action  
Consumers Union  
Corporate Ethics International  
Dads & Daughters  
Eagle Forum  
Essential Action  
Global Citizen Center  
Global Exchange  
Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids  
Massachusetts Public Health Association  
MomsRising  
National Council of Churches Committee on Public Education and Literacy  
National PTA  
Obligation, Inc.  
Organic Consumers Association  
Parents' Action for Children  
Simple Living Network  
Sojourners  
Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment (TRUCE)  
The Motherhood Project  
The Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Child Advocacy  
The Simplicity Forum  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
Vermont Earth Institute

Cecile Andrews, author, *The Circle of Simplicity*

Joan Blades, co-founder, MoveOn.org; co-author, *Motherhood Manifesto*

Dina Borzekowski, EdD, Assistant Professor, Department of Health, Behavior and Society,  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

David Bosworth, Associate Professor, Creative Writing Program, Department of English,  
University of Washington

T. Berry Brazelton, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, Emeritus, Harvard Medical School, Children's  
Hospital Boston; Founder, Brazelton Touchpoints Center; co-author, *Touchpoints 0-3* and  
*Touchpoints 3-6*

Brita Butler-Wall, PhD, Member, Seattle School Board; Executive Director, Citizens' Campaign  
for Commercial-Free Schools

Raffi Cavoukian, singer, author, founder of Child Honoring

Dimitri A. Christakis, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Director, Child Health  
Institute, University of Washington School of Medicine; co-author, *The Elephant in the  
Living Room: Make Television Work for Your Kids*

Thomas J. Cottle, PhD, Professor of Education, Boston University; author, *When the Music  
Stopped, Sense of Self* and *At Peril*

Donald R. Davis, PhD, Research Associate, Biochemical Institute, University of Texas at Austin

John De Graaf, co-author, *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic*

Nathan Dungan, President and Founder, Share, Save, Spend; author, *Prodigal Sons & Material  
Girls*

Teresa K. Duryea, MD, Associate Professor, Academic General Pediatrics, Baylor College of  
Medicine

The Rev. O. C. Edwards, Jr., Episcopal priest (retired); Co-chair, National Council of Churches  
Faith & Order Commission

Marjorie V. Fields, EdD, Professor Emeritus, Early Childhood Education, University of Alaska  
SE

Roy F. Fox, Professor and Chair, Department of Learning, Teaching, & Curriculum, University  
of Missouri-Columbia; author, *Harvesting Minds* and *MediaSpeak*

Henry A. Giroux, PhD, Global Television Network Chair Professor, English and Cultural  
Studies, McMaster University; author, *America on the Edge, The Abandoned  
Generation, and Teachers as Intellectuals*

Todd Gitlin, PhD, Professor of Journalism and Sociology, Columbia University; author, *The  
Intellectuals and the Flag, The Sixties, and Media Unlimited*

Joan Gussow, EdD, M. S. Rose Professor Emeritus, Nutrition and Education, Teachers College,  
Columbia University

Jon D. Hanson, Professor of Law, Harvard Law School

Hal Hamilton, Executive Director, Sustainability Institute

Jacqueline Hamilton, Executive Director, Educational Consortium of Central LA

Randy Hayes, Executive Director, International Forum on Globalization

Sut Jhally, PhD, Founder and Executive Director, The Media Education Foundation

Carden Johnston, MD, FAAP, FRCP, Past President, American Academy of Pediatrics

Tim Kasser, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychology, Knox College; author, *The High Price of  
Materialism*

Francine Kaufman, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, Keck School of Medicine, University of  
Southern California; author, *Diabetes: A Doctor and Her Patients on the Front Lines of  
the Obesity-Diabetes Epidemic*

Stephanie Kaza, Professor, Environmental Program, University of Vermont

Jean Kilbourne, author, *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*

David C. Korten, author, *When Corporations Rule the World* and *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*

Velma LaPoint, PhD, Professor, Department of Human Development & Psychoeducational Studies, Howard University

Frances Moore Lappe, author, *Diet for a Small Planet* and *Democracy's Edge*; co-author, *Hope's Edge*

Diane E. Levin, PhD, Professor of Education, Wheelock College; author, *Remote Control Childhood*

David Marshak, PhD, Professor, College of Education, Seattle University

Robert McChesney, PhD, Research Professor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; author, *The Problem of the Media*

Bob McCannon, Founding Executive Director, The New Mexico Media Literacy Project

Bernard McGrane, PhD, Associate Professor of Sociology, Chapman University; author, *The Un-TV and the 10 Mph Car*

Bill McKibben, author, *The End of Nature*, *Enough*, *Wandering Home*, and *The Age of Missing Information*

Robert A. Mendelson MD, FAAP

Tom Meyer, PhD, Director, Hudson Valley Writing Project; Associate Professor of Secondary Education, SUNY New Paltz

Mark Crispin Miller, PhD, Professor of Professor of Culture and Communication, New York University; author of *Boxed In*, *The Bush Dyslexicon* and *Fooled Again*

Stephanie Mills, author, *Epicurean Simplicity*

Diane M. Morrison, PhD, Professor, University of Washington School of Social Work

Peggy O'Mara, editor and publisher, *Mothering Magazine*

Kathleen G. Nelson, MD, FAAP, Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Professor of Pediatrics, University of Alabama School of Medicine

Marion Nestle, PhD, MPH, Paulette Goddard Professor of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health, New York University; author, *Food Politics*, *Safe Food* and *What to Eat*

Terry Parsons, Staff Officer for Stewardship, the Episcopal Church in the United States of America

Mary Pipher, author, *Reviving Ophelia*, *Writing to Change the World* and *Letters to a Young Therapist*

Alvin F. Poussaint, MD, Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; Director, Media Center, Judge Baker Children's Center

Vicki Robin, co-author, *Your Money or Your Life*

Jeanne and Dick Roy, Co-Founders, Northwest Earth Institute

John Ruby, DMD, PhD, Associate Professor of Pediatric Dentistry, School of Dentistry, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Susan Sarandon

Juliet Schor, PhD, Professor, Department of Sociology, Boston College; author, *Born to Buy*, *The Overspent American* and *The Overworked American*

Donald Shifrin, MD, FAAP, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, University of Washington School of Medicine

Michele Simon, JD, MPH, Adjunct Professor, University of California, Hastings College of the Law; author, *Appetite for Profit*

Joshua Sparrow, MD, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; co-author, *Touchpoints 0-3* and *Touchpoints 3-6*

Inger L. Stole, Associate Professor, Institute of Communications Research, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; author, *Advertising on Trial*

Vic Strasburger, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, University of New Mexico School of Medicine; co-author, *Children, Adolescents, & the Media*

Charles Terry, former President, The Philanthropic Collaborative

Julie Taylor, Children, Youth and Family Advocacy, Women's Division, United Methodist Church

Rev. Romal J. Tune, CEO Clergy Strategic Alliances, LLC

Jeff Weissglass, Board Chair, More Than Money Institute

Frederick J. Zimmerman, PhD, Associate Professor, Departments of Health Services & Pediatrics, University of Washington; co-author, *The Elephant in the Living Room: Make Television Work for Your Kids*