

PRESS RELEASE

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PORNOGRAPHY ENDANGERS THE LIVES OF WOMEN

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women wants Canadian women to boycott Eaton's, the Royal Bank and First Choice Pay-TV. NAC also demands that all pornographic images of women be removed from Pay-TV. NAC members have examined material now being shown on the U.S. Playboy Channel and found it to be pornographic. Similar material will soon be shown in Canada by First Choice Pay-TV.

"The Playboy Channel is not erotic; true erotica is mutualistic and empowers women. Pornography combines degradation, humiliation, violence or coercion with sexuality. It limits and demeans women. Pornography exploits women and contributes to rape, wife battering, and all forms of violence against women. Depicting women as silly, mindless playmates who appear to enjoy humiliation and degradation is false and destructive. Such stereotyping allows men to keep women out of positions of power and away from well-paying jobs", Jillian Ridington, NAC spokesperson stated.

The issue is not censorship, but regulation. Canadians live very comfortably with regulation of all forms of broadcasting through C.R.T.C. There are many things that cannot be shown on television, or said on the airwaves. The C.R.T.C. recently spent three years, and a great deal of money, on a Task Force on Sex-role Stereotyping. The report of that task force was released in September, and has been accepted in principle by the C.R.T.C. The broadcasting industry has agreed to self-regulation for a two-year period. "First Choice Pay-TV's programming already clearly violates those recommendations. We are simply urging the C.R.T.C. to apply the recommendations of its own Task Force to Pay-TV", stated NAC's Pat Hacker.

Many Canadians rely on home entertainment. For many, First Choice will be the only Pay-TV channel to offer first-run movies. If they do not want pornography, "first choice" means "no choice".

Studies by researchers, including Dr. Edward Donnerstein of the University of Wisconsin, and Dr. Neil Malamuth of the University of Manitoba, have clearly established that pornography leads to misogyny and to violence against women. Bringing pornography into the nation's living rooms will make it appear more normal and acceptable, and therefore much more dangerous.

NAC and other women's groups are organizing a public meeting on pornography and Pay-TV February 17th, at 7:30 p.m., at City Hall Council Chambers (Toronto). This meeting will be followed by an all-day symposium in March, also at Toronto City Hall.

NAC is urging women to write to Francis Fox, Minister of Communications, calling for the removal of pornographic images from Pay-TV, and is also suggesting that Canadians boycott Eaton's stores. Eaton's is a major shareholder in the production company which will make pornographic films for First Choice.

"Write to Eaton's and tell them why you will no longer do business there", NAC urged the women of Canada. They also urged that the Royal Bank, which is providing funding to First Choice, should not be patronized.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women is an umbrella organization of 230 women's groups working for the improvement of the status of women in Canada.