

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 22, 2026

The Honorable Brendan Carr
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

RE: FCC's Media Bureau Seeks Comment on Further Empowering Parents to Protect Their Children and Make Informed Choices About the TV Programs Their Children Watch

Dear Chairman Carr:

We write in response to your questions regarding TV ratings and programs that include gender identity themes or topics and to strongly oppose efforts to censor the inclusion of transgender characters or topics, including by rating programming differently just because it includes transgender people.

We strongly believe that parents should decide what their children watch on television. That is why Congress, in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, gave the Federal Communications Commission conditional authority to “prescribe...guidelines and recommended procedures for the identification and rating of video programming that contains sexual, violent, or other indecent material about which parents should be informed before it is displayed to children...”¹ only if the Commission determines that “distributors of video programming have not... established voluntary rules for rating video programming that contains sexual, violent, or other indecent material about which parents should be informed before it is displayed to children.”² This provision reflected Congress’ desire that parents have the tools to make informed decisions about what their children watch based on whether a program includes sexual, violent, or indecent materials. This *conditional* authority also reflected a preference for industry to self-regulate—and that’s what happened. Distributors established the TV Oversight Management Board (TVOMB), which developed the TV Parental Guidelines age rating system, and pursuant to the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Commission found that industry’s approach met the relevant statutory criteria. The current guidelines have worked for decades and provide parents with the tools they need to determine what their children should and should not watch. That is why FCC’s own most recent annual report found only 11 pieces of public correspondence

¹ Pub. L. No. 104-104, § 551(b).

² Pub. L. No. 104-104, § 551(e).

relevant to TVOMB's work.³ In fact, 96% of parents expressed satisfaction with the accuracy of the rating system for TV shows overall in a survey conducted by TVOMB in 2024.⁴

We are deeply concerned that the questions you pose, such as whether programs should be rated differently because they discuss gender identity, indicate that you believe there is a role for the FCC to play in determining these ratings—despite Congress' preference that these ratings be determined by the industry and Congress explicitly stripping FCC of any authority to do so if the industry establishes such ratings (as they have). This request for comment appears to be an unlawful attempt by FCC to pressure broadcast licensees to censor content, including representation of transgender people, in their programming and just the latest political attempt of FCC to censor content the Administration does not agree with.

The rating system is intended to address “sexual, violent, or other indecent material,” and we reject the idea that the inclusion of transgender characters or topics is “sexual, violent, or indecent.” Programs should not have higher ratings or content warning simply because of the identity of the programs' characters. Applying higher ratings or content warnings because of a character's gender identity would be harmful to transgender people and transgender acceptance and would harken back to a time when politicians sought to censor television programming because they included minorities.⁵ Studies show that LGBTQI+ representation in media both improve young LGBTQI+ people's self-acceptance⁶ and shape the broader public's acceptance of LGBTQI+ people.⁷ This attempt to censor transgender characters is an attempt to roll back acceptance of the transgender community.

Transgender people are part of every community, and many recognize their gender identity at a young age. Transgender people, including transgender young people, deserve to see themselves represented in media—and the public agrees. A 2025 survey found that 78% of non-LGBTQI+ Americans believe everyone deserves to feel represented in media, including on TV.⁸

Any attempt by FCC to censor content because it includes transgender characters or topics would raise both legal and constitutional concerns. As we previously highlighted, FCC lacks authority to prescribe guidelines and recommendations for TV ratings. The FCC is also barred from engaging in censorship or promulgating regulations or conditions that interfere with the right of

³ John Hendel, *Brendan Carr floats TV ratings for transgender content*, POLITICO (Apr. 22, 2026), <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/04/22/brendan-carr-tv-gender-identity-fcc-00887017>.

⁴ *TV Content Rating System Reaches Record Satisfaction and Usage Levels, Survey Finds* (Press Release), TV PARENTAL GUIDELINES MONITORING BOARD (Dec. 11, 2024), https://www.tvguidelines.org/resources/Release_121124.pdf.

⁵ See, e.g., Kristin Hunt, *Mississippi banned 'Sesame Street' for showing Black and White kids playing*, WASH. POST (Feb. 5, 2023), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2023/02/05/sesame-street-ban-mississippi/>.

⁶ 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, THE TREVOR PROJECT (May 2022), <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/#representation>

⁷ See, e.g., Brent Lang, *Ellen DeGeneres Influenced Gay Rights Views More Than Any Other Celebrity* (Study), VARIETY (June 30, 2015), <https://variety.com/2015/tv/news/ellen-degeneres-gay-rights-gay-marriage-1201531462/>; *Accelerating Acceptance 2025 Report*, GLAAD (2025), <https://glaad.org/accelerating-acceptance-2025/>.

⁸ GLAAD, *supra* n. 7.

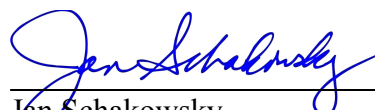
free speech.⁹ Any attempt to issue rating warnings for depictions and themes related to transgender people would also raise concerns of content-based and viewpoint discrimination in violation of the First Amendment.

In conclusion, we urge the FCC to abandon any efforts to seek to impose higher ratings on programs or content warnings because the program includes transgender characters or topics. As FCC Commissioner Anna Gomez stated, “This is a solution in search of a problem, and another example of this Commission prioritizing culture war politics over the real issues that affect consumers every day.”¹⁰

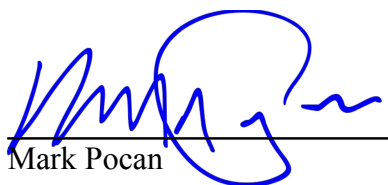
Sincerely,



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



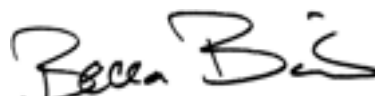
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



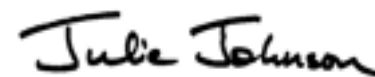
Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson
Member of Congress

⁹ 47 U.S. Code § 326

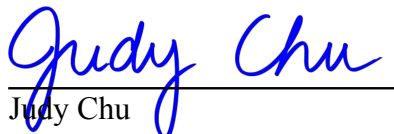
¹⁰ Hendel *supra* n. 3.



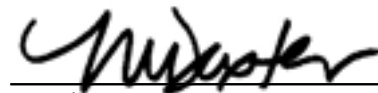
Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



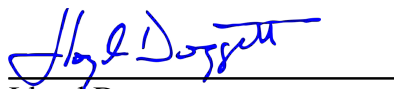
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



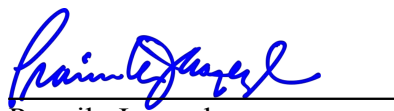
Maxine Dexter, M.D.
Member of Congress



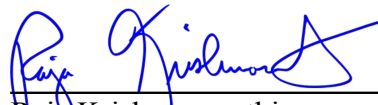
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



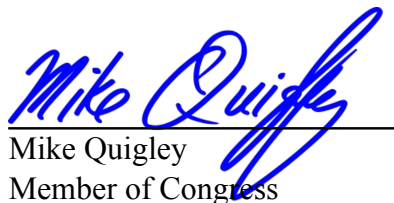
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



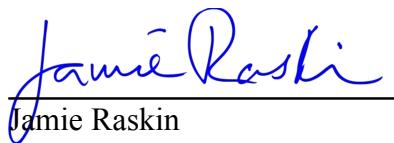
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



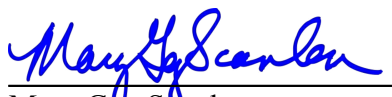
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



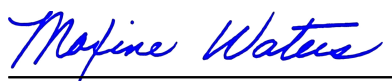
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



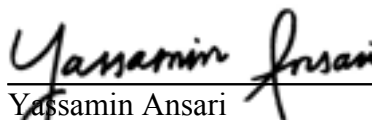
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



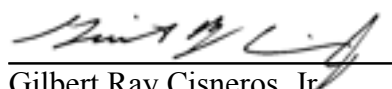
Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



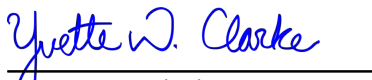
Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



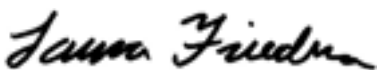
Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



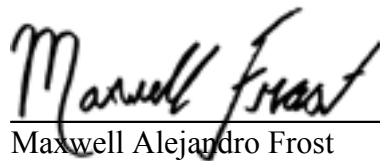
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



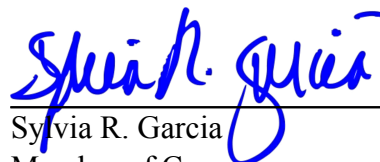
Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



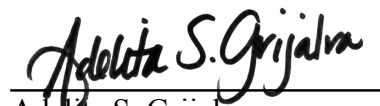
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



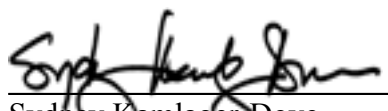
Adelta S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



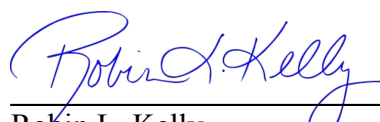
Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



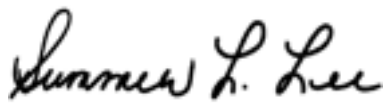
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



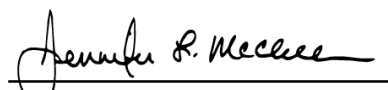
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



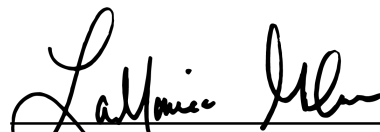
Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



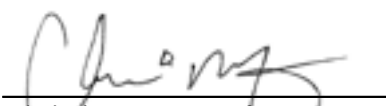
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



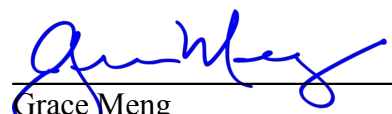
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Christian D. Menefee
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



SETH MOULTON
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



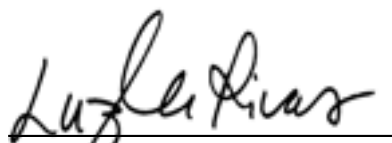
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



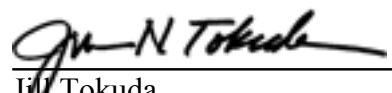
Luz M. Rivas
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



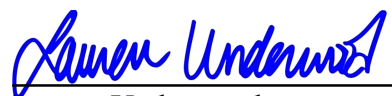
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



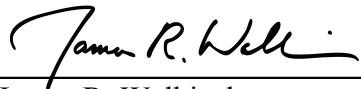
Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



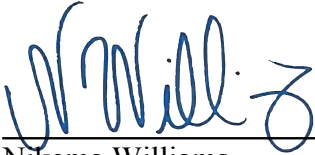
Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress