State Attorneys General and Violent Video Games

by Phyllis Schlafly September 10, 2010

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Extremely violent and addictive video games are polluting the minds of an entire generation of children, and most parents are clueless. Young players earn game points based on how many murders they commit, with increasingly realistic bloodshed splattered around for teenagers and pre-teens to learn to enjoy.

These highly disturbing video games encourage players to shoot innocent bystanders to win points and to commit acts like using shovels to decapitate people so dogs can then fetch their chopped-off heads. If you find that shocking to read, just imagine how much more shocking it is for a seven-year-old to see it acted out in gory graphics and to win points for committing such crimes.

Other scenes include having sex with prostitutes and then killing them or committing heinous acts of terrorism. These deadly role-playing games not only desensitize and reward players for acts of extreme violence, but are highly addictive.

Parental control isn't the solution because parents typically have no way to fully review these games before giving or denying permission to their children to play them. Some games are programmed to become more violent while the game is being played, and parents usually don't or can't play the games.

Children don't necessarily know the difference between fantasy and reality. Brain research indicates that teenagers' brains, as well as children's brains, are still developing and may store violent images as real memories.

Virtually every school massacre can be traced to the young killers' addiction to violent video games. The video game industry reaps tens of billions of dollars in revenue and now even surpasses Hollywood in profits, revenues and influence.

A case challenging a law limiting the sale of these violent video games to children is now pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. This case reached the High Court because a couple of lower federal court judges, the kind we call supremacists, ruled that these games are entitled to as much free-speech protection as, for example, Shakespeare, and laws limiting sales to children are unconstitutional.

The video game industry is trying to wrap its evil products in the First Amendment. The industry is asking the High Court to create a new type of free speech that would make it impossible to put any limit on this victimizing of children.

The video game industry could lose billions of dollars in future revenue if the Supreme Court rules against creating a new free speech right to corrupt children's minds and morals with what can be called image abuse. One commentator described this outcome as "apocalyptic" for the industry.

We would expect the law-and-order state Attorneys General, many of whom were elected on promises to protect children and families, to weigh in on this important case and stand up against the harm to children. Eleven state Attorneys General have joined a friend-of-the-court (amicus) brief on the side of California to stop the sale of violent video games to children: Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia.

So far, the other 38 state Attorneys General are either ducking this issue, hoping the voters won't notice, or are even considering signing an amicus brief in favor of violent video games! Apparently, some care more about getting big campaign contributions than upholding their campaign promises.

Money talks, and the video game industry has megabucks to lobby and motivate politically ambitious public officials. State Attorney General is an office that is frequently seen as a stepping stone to be elected Governor.

The deadline for states to submit arguments in this case is September 17. State Attorneys General are now making their decisions about whether to be on the side of the children or the video game industry.

The California Supervising Deputy Attorney General defending the law limiting sales of violent video game to kids, Zackery Morazzini, said, "It's our understanding that there's a pretty intense lobbying effort" by the video game industry. Given that plenty of money is available to support aggressive lobbying by the wrong side, families need to speak up and tell their state Attorney General to get on the right side.

In Utah, pro-family legislators and voters held a press conference on August 23 to tell their Attorney General to help protect children against violent video games. Groups in other states should do likewise, and fast.

State Attorneys General may hold the key to which side wins this landmark legal case. It's time for families to make clear to their own state Attorney General that the voters will hold them accountable for what they do about this problem of filling children's minds and memories with gory, criminal images.