

Coalition for the Prevention of Alcohol Problems

1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20009-5728

February 6, 2002

Mr. Robert C. Wright
Vice Chairman and Executive Officer, General Electric
Chairman and CEO, NBC
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112

Dear Mr. Wright:

As leaders of organizations concerned with public health and the well being of young people and families, we are dismayed by your decision to begin airing hard liquor ads on NBC, ending five decades of responsible voluntary refusal of such ads.

We strongly urge you to reconsider NBC's policy and we respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss our concerns, including a number of gross deficiencies in NBC's guidelines governing the airing of liquor ads.

Too many influences already promote excessive and underage drinking and hard-liquor ads on NBC can only make that problem worse. Alcohol is by far America's number-one youth drug problem. It kills six times more kids than all illicit drugs combined and underage drinking costs our country an estimated \$52 billion per year. According to the latest government data, nearly one-third of all 12- to 20-year-olds report using alcohol within the past month. Of those youth, nearly 20 percent binge drink.

We are hardly alone in our concern. NBC's decision to begin accepting hard liquor ads flies squarely in the face of public opinion. A survey conducted by Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, Inc., in mid-December, 2001 found that 68 percent of respondents opposed NBC's action with half (48 percent) registering *strong* opposition to it. More than 7 of 10 (72 percent) surveyed supported network television policies that voluntarily keep liquor ads off TV, and 70 percent of Americans agreed that it is dangerous to have liquor ads on TV because they will introduce underage youth to liquor. Subsequent public opinion surveys by TV Guide and by Initiative Media North America similarly found that large majorities of Americans oppose NBC's acceptance of liquor ads.

— more —

Co-Chairs: *George Hacker, Center for Science in the Public Interest, (202) 332-9110, ext. 343*
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Bill McColl, National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors, (703) 741-7636 • Maribeth Oakes, National PTA, (202) 289-6790
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We would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience, preferably in Washington, D.C., in the hope of reaching a satisfactory resolution of this issue. We believe that NBC can truly show leadership in protecting young people and serving the public interest. We will follow up with your office in the near future to inquire about arranging a meeting. To reach us, please contact Mr. George Hacker, at (202) 332-9110, x343.

Thank you for your consideration. We hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,



George A. Hacker
Director
Alcohol Policies Project

On behalf of the following:

Lori Dorfman, Ph.D., Director
Berkeley Media Studies Group

Arthur T. Dean, Chairman and CEO
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

Joan Kiley, Executive Director
Community Recovery Services

Art Jaeger, Associate Director
Consumer Federation of America

Connie Mackey, Vice President of Government Affairs
Family Research Council

Tom Minnery, Vice President of Public Policy
Focus on the Family

Jim Winkler, General Secretary
General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church

David Rosenblum, Executive Director
Join Together

Patricia Harmon, Executive Director
Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth

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Judy Cushing, President and CEO
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Rev. Jesse W. Brown, Jr., Executive Director
National Association of African Americans for Positive Imagery

Bill Burnett, President
National Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors

Julie Novak, DNSc, RN, CPNP, President
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

Rev. Richard Cizik, Vice-President for Governmental Affairs
National Association of Evangelicals

Vincent Hayden, Chairman
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Religious Freedom Coalition

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Andrew McGuire, Executive Director
Trauma Foundation

William T. Devlin, President
Urban Family

The Most Reverend Joseph A. Galante, Chairman, Committee on Communications
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Maureen Sedonaen, Executive Director
Youth Leadership Institute

cc:

The Honorable Ernest Hollings
The Honorable John McCain
The Honorable Conrad Burns
The Honorable John Kerry
The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
The Honorable Harry Reid
The Honorable John Warner
The Honorable Billy Tauzin
The Honorable Fred Upton
The Honorable Sherrod Brown
The Honorable John Dingell
The Honorable Cliff Stearns
The Honorable Edolphus Towns
The Honorable Frank Wolf
The Honorable Edward Markey
The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
The Honorable J.C. Watts
The Honorable Joseph Pitts

B. Robert Okun, Vice President, NBC Washington
Joseph Califano, Columbia University, Center on Alcohol and Substance Abuse
John Walters, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy
Terrence S. Donahue, Acting Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency
Prevention, United States Department of Justice

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