

March 24, 2025

To: Alaska Legislature / Attn. Public Comment House Bill 35

Re: Proposed "MA" (Mature) Channel Restriction

There is a difference between "mature" and "sexually explicit".  
They do not mean the same thing.

AKDOC already has the authority to restrict any media /  
material containing sexually explicit content, nudity, etc. (e.g.,  
Hbo, Showtime). Recently even the Paramount Channel was blocked  
because of one sexual scene contained in the series Yellowstone:  
1883.

MA (mature) programming, however, means topics or themes that a parent might not want their young child exposed to, such as realistic accounts of war, genocide or slavery (i.e., "history"), or abortion or gay rights (i.e., "political debate"). Channels that will be blocked under this amendment include CNN, the History Channel and National Geographic, also PBS.

A ban on MA programming would mean a real loss of access to historical and political programs. What would remain would be largely programs targeted toward young children, containing young child actors (e.g., G/PG, Disney, Nickelodeon). Restricting inmates to children's programming is the unintended consequence of the legislature's ratings restrictions.

For example, under the current "R-rated" restrictions, prisoners can not watch Uprising -- the true story of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising during WWII, but they can watch Hannah Montana and High School Musical. Maybe instead of adding "MA" restrictions, the legislature should consider removing the "R" restriction?

The 1st Amendment guarantee of Freedom of Speech includes the right of "access" to the speech of others, such as political commentary and historical research. AKDOC can already prevent access to sexually explicit material without any additional blanket "ratings" restrictions, which only serve to infantilize prisoners rather than lead them to a state of responsible adulthood.

I therefore respectfully ask that this amendment be denied.

Sincerely,

