

Jamil Dawud Al-Amriki
Wildwood Correctional Center
10 Chugach Ave
Kenai, Alaska 99611

March 23rd, 2025

ATTN: SEN. Löki Tobin

RE: House Bill 35, TVMA Media
Senate Bill 19

My name is Jamil Al-Amriki, and I am a long-term prisoner at Wildwood Correctional Center. I'm writing to discourage the amendment to HB35 seeking to ban televised TVMA media.

First, let us acknowledge that the Department of Corrections currently employs a two-pronged, law and process, approach to all media products before introducing them into a facility. The Law - AS 33.30.015 - now bans all media rated R, X, and NC17. The Process - line item screening for prohibited content - now bans any media product (PG, PG13, TV14, or TVMA) or platform that violates policy for explicit content. Under this two-pronged, law and process, approach, Alaskan prisoners have zero exposure to prohibited explicit material such that there is no need for a HB35 ban on TVMA media.

The TVMA rating system is fickle and not as straight forward as one might think. For example, the blockbuster films Venom, Transformers, and White House Down are rated PG13; each film has been screened by the Department and approved for inmate viewing. However, when broadcast on television, all three air under a TVMA rating. Conversely, other R-rated films - Wolf of Wall Street, Straight Outta Compton, and Den of Thieves to name a few - air on television under a TV14 rating. To be clear, basic cable networks do edit and format R-rated films to comply with TV14 requirements and contemporary community standards. However, adaptations of PG13 movies into TVMA broadcasts does exhibit a legislative quagmire where a single PG13 film will be authorized under HB35 but also not authorized under the same bill. The application of a TVMA ban simply makes no sense.

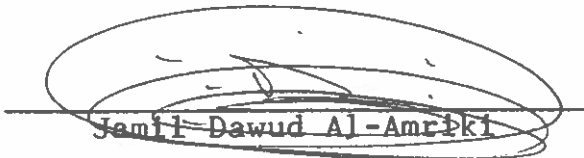
Streaming services, such as HBO Max, Apple TV+, and Netflix, do offer an explicit brand of TVMA programming, but law and process have prevailed. Alaskan inmates do not have access to explicit streaming or any other cable network broadcasting explicit content. That said, virtually every cable network - NatGeo, USA, BBC America, BET, CNN, Cartoon Network, etc. - exhibits at least some movie, documentary, or television show bearing the TVMA classification. None of these programs are explicit or obscene as prohibited under law and process. Basic cable networks, those available to Alaskan inmates, are required to observe the contemporary community standard as applied to national obscenity regulations. A TVMA ban is redundant and unnecessary.

Now then, what is to be made of enforcement under HB35 if a ban on all TVMA content succeeds? Premium channels, such as HBO and Showtime, were originally taken when AS 33.30.015 banned R-rated media. Logically, similar enforcement protocols will be used to scrub TVMA from the institutions. A real possibility of carte blanche restrictions on on public television, news outlets, science and history, pop culture, and various entertainment networks. No legislature would promote a ban against National Geographic, but under the broad language of HB35 the Department would lack the institutional flexibility to save it due to TVMA content. A TVMA ban ultimately results in unintended censorship.

The role media plays in common bonding complements penological goals of rehabilitation. It may seem funny that The Mandalorian(Disney+ series, TVMA) should be thought of as rehabilitative media. However, prisoners under cumulative bans on media and technology experience mounting layers of isolation, prominently felt during reintegration. The fact that people attract to shared likes and interests, and similarly retract from awkwardness and embarrassment, captures how isolation forward policies disservice common bonding between prisoners and the public. No - bans on media do not cause recitivism, but Yes - they do erect substantive social obstructions to reintegration. The legislature might consider fewer bans in HB35, such as R-rated films limited to historical, scientific, and military subjects. A ban on TVMA media is too harmful to accomplish intended penological goals.

In conclusion, the law already outlines what is innapropriate under obscenity regulations, and the Department already implements a process to censor prohibited TVMA programming; the system already works so that prisoners never have access to Game of Thrones(HBO series, TVMA) and other explicit media products. Therefore, HB35 does not change a prisoners access to explicit TVMA media products; but it does strangle Department flexabilities that permit prisoners access to native American documentaries such as Sugarcane(NatGeo doc, TVMA) and Star Wars stuff such as The Mandilorian(Disney+ series, TVMA). Basic cable networks, at the direction of our national government, apply contemporary community standards consistant with Alaska's threshold for obscenity under 22 AAC 05.660(a)(22). From this, the contemporary community standard, I urge lawmakers to preserve institutional flexabilities and reject an amendment to ban TVMA media in HB35.

Respectfully,



Jamil Dawud Al-Amrpk1

Televised Program Ratings (Two-Month Sample)

CHANNEL	AIR DATE	PROGRAM TITLE	TV RATING	MPAA RATING
PBS	03.23.25	Marie-Antoinette, Series	TVMA	NR
FX	03.03.25	Transformers: The Last Knight	TVMA	PG13
USA	02.28.25	Bel-Air, Series	TVMA	NR
NatGeo	02.13.25	Sugarcane, Documentary	TVMA	NR
FX	02.04.25	Fast & Furious: Furious 7	TVMA	PG13
FX	02.03.25	Uncharted	TVMA	PG13
FX	02.02.25	Free Guy	TVMA	PG13
SYFY	02.01.25	White House Down	TVMA	PG13
CNN	02.01.25	Real Time with Bill Maher, News	TVMA	NR
FX	01.27.25	Venom	TVMA	PG13
TNT	03.22.25	Joker	TV14	R
AMC	03.08.25	Den of Thieves	TV14	R
TNT	03.02.25	Training Day	TV14	R
TBS	02.28.25	Straight Outta Compton	TV14	R
AMC	02.10.25	The Town	TV14	R
FRFM	02.02.25	Titanic	TV14	R
E!	02.01.25	Hustlers	TV14	R
CMDY	02.01.25	We're The Millers	TV14	R
TBS	02.01.25	Mad Max: Fury Road	TV14	R
MTV	01.31.25	Wolf of Wall Street	TV14	R

Note: This table highlights some examples of televised TVMA media that would be unreasonably banned under HB35 even though these programs are in compliance with current state laws and do not exhibit explicit material. For contrast, compare these examples of televised TV14 media - R-rated movies edited and formatted to remove the explicit content - that HB35 does not affect.