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*The nation's most influential advocacy organization
protecting children against sex, violence and profanity in entertainment*

September 14, 2020

Hon. Josh Hawley
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2509

Dear Senator Hawley:

Thank you for your powerful letter to Mr. Reed Hastings, CEO of Netflix, dated September 11th. In recent months the Parents Television Council has been actively engaged in calling on Netflix to cease its corporate practice of graphically and grotesquely sexualizing children through its entertainment programming. The broad and bipartisan congressional condemnation of Netflix's corporate irresponsibility is deeply gratifying.

It is urgent for you and your colleagues on the Hill to understand that the uproar surrounding the Netflix program **Cuties** reflects only the latest of multiple examples of its sexualization and exploitation of children. As you work to secure answers to the questions you posed to Mr. Hastings, we urge you to understand the depth and breadth of this truly vexing subject. Here are just a few recent examples, and please forgive me for using such explicit descriptions of the programming. It is vital for you and your colleagues to understand just how pervasive the child/sex themes are:

- The Netflix movie **Desire** included a scene that depicts a 9-year-old girl self-stimulating herself to an orgasm.
- The original Netflix animated comedy series **Big Mouth** centers on children who are going through puberty. Episodes include a full-screen close-up of a 13-year old's penis and testicles; a girl who talks to her vagina about her life, with the vulva, clitoris and labia shown in graphic close-up for extended periods of time; sketches of a middle school student's bare breasts; and two 12-year olds playing a game with two high schoolers where they face each other in a competition to see who can ejaculate onto a cracker the fastest.
- The Netflix series **Sex Education** focuses on the sex lives of high school children. The content depicts adult actors who appear to be high-school aged characters engaged in graphic sex scenes with dialog that one would expect only to find in XXX films.
- The storyline for the Netflix movie **Baby** centers on, and glamorizes, teen prostitution.

Senator Hawley, one instance of a Netflix program that sexualizes children could be an anomaly; two instances could be a coincidence; three instances could be a random connection; but four instances, and actually it's more than four, suggest a corporate practice for such programming.

Netflix has defended **Cuties** saying it is a “social commentary against the sexualization of young children... a powerful story about the pressure young girls face on social media and from society more generally growing up...” We understand and agree that the pressure young girls face today is indeed a very real problem, and one that we must work tirelessly to resolve. But as you can see, Netflix is a prime purveyor of the very type of hypersexualized media that this movie purports to condemn.

We call on you and your colleagues in both chambers to convene hearings on the entertainment media’s troubling trend of sexualizing children in its programming. Please force industry executives to answer – under oath – the important questions that you and others have raised during this **Cuties** controversy. But please also call on scientists and academicians – those who are experts in the field of the media’s impact on children – to testify on this matter.

Perhaps everyone will emerge from those hearings with an understanding of the potential harm, especially to children. And perhaps everyone will emerge from those hearings with a commitment never again to sexually exploit anyone for the sake of entertainment.

Thank you for your leadership on this important matter. Please don’t hesitate to call on us at any time if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Timothy F. Winter
President

cc: Sen. Tom Cotton
Sen. Ted Cruz
Sen. Mike Lee
Rep. Jim Banks
Rep. Tulsi Gabbard