

# May Edition: Congress and the Media

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### Memorial Day



It's Memorial Day weekend, a time to stop and remember those who have gone before us. It is also a time to pause and appreciate those who have fought/died in the name of freedom. Unite the USA salutes our veterans and all servicemen and women both past and present.

This month, Unite the USA is honored to present an article by L. Brent Bozell III of the Media Research Center. You will gain insight about Congress and the media bias from the founder of the largest media watchdog organization.

Thank you for your patriotism. Together, we can make a positive difference in America!

God bless,  
Carrie and Stacie Stoelting  
Founders of [Unite the USA](#)

### About the Author

Founder and President of the [Media Research Center](#), L. Brent Bozell III runs the largest media watchdog organization in America. Established in 1987, the MRC has made "media bias" a household term, tracking it and printing the compiled evidence daily. Mr. Bozell is a nationally syndicated writer whose work appears in publications such as Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, The Washington Times, The New York Post, The L.A. Times and National Review.

"TV and the Soft Eshoo Bill"



By L. Brent Bozell

Lest any citizen think the U.S. Congress is absorbed only in the weightiest matters like nationalizing the health care system, the House passed piece of legislation - a bill urging that TV commercials be no louder than the shows in which they appear.

The Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation Act (CALM) passed Tuesday on a voice vote, "presumably expressed at a comfortable level," joked a USA Today writer. It now goes to the Senate, which is considering an identical bill.

"I not only dive for the mute button, but I end up having to close my windows so that the blast doesn't affect by neighbors," said Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, the entrenched Silicon Valley Democrat who is the major promoter of CALM. "I live on a cul-de-sac, and so the sound resonates."

Everyone knows these commercials are louder than the programs that surround them. What? The broadcasters presume their entire audience hiked to the refrigerator for a beverage and wouldn't want to miss a word of Subway's "Five Dollar Footlong" song? But Eshoo exaggerates a bit to call it a "blast," as if a jet fighter had grazed her roof.

It's annoying, very annoying. But nothing more!

It's mildly surprising that the Democrats haven't found this problem to be a violation of the Geneva Conventions for torture. If playing loud rap music at Guantanamo qualifies, why not this?

There's no doubt this law would do well in the polls. Eshoo says that never in her 17 years in the House has she carried a bill for which there has been so much enthusiasm: "Only the Do Not Call list has even come close." The appeal is bipartisan, as Republican Rep. Cliff Stearns insisted: "You can say: 'Well, that's fine. Just turn it off,' but it's constantly an irritant when you have to do it. And we've got all the new bowl games coming up."

But lost in this populist battle is the raging irony: What gives Congress the right to interfere with commercials by enacting new legislation and regulations when they inherently flee from the proposition that they have an obligation to enforce existing decency laws in the programming sponsored by these ads? That, too, polls very well.

Or think of it this way: Is a loud commercial really much more offensive than nudity at the Super Bowl and F-bombs at the Golden Globes? If the networks ran a loud promo for "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," is that really more offensive than the recent lap-dance scene at a strip club on "Family Guy"?

Take a poll and you'll see which offense is of greater concern to the public.

Or just ask a parent - any parent. In fact, some members of Congress have a voting record that demonstrates that off-kilter offense meter. Twelve Democrat sponsors of Eshoo's CALM bill (including well-known veterans like Fortney Stark and John Conyers) were part of the tiny fraction of "brave" legislators to vote against the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act in 2006, which increased the maximum indecency fine on huge entertainment conglomerates tenfold, from \$32,500 to \$325,000 per violation. (It passed 379 to 35.)

In fact, Eshoo's bill may be nothing more than, well, noise. It doesn't really change anything that wasn't already changing. Her bill originally demanded that television advertisements could be no

louder than the average maximum loudness of the programs they accompany. She changed her bill to instead adopt guidelines already being developed by the TV industry, which she said will accomplish the same goal. Given the industry's similar promises to develop standards to curb indecency, we can all begin to laugh (quietly) now.

And where are the usual "free market" lobbyists who bang the cans against government imposing decency regulations on broadcasters? They seem to have lost their cans on the CALM bill. It shouldn't go unnoticed by the public that these professional libertarian purists in Washington seem to wage war only when their funders in the TV industry instruct them to do so.