

# Protect Free Speech by Rejecting Content Regulation

In recent years, the First Amendment's protections have been increasingly extended to commercial speech, such as product advertisements and even political messages. However, significant gaps in these protections still exist. Many states have attempted to regulate the content of video games in recent years, while federal regulations on drug and medical device advertisements inhibit individuals' ability to learn about well-documented scientific findings.

As new technologies provide an ever-growing array of media, Congress will face increasing pressure to impose content regulations—including regulations on video games, blogs, and social networking websites such as Facebook.

As portable devices such as iPods and cell phones become increasingly equipped for video and multimedia playback, regulation advocates will push for laws governing what can and cannot be viewed in public areas, under the guise of protecting children from harmful material. Such regulations should be avoided. Parents, not government regulators, are best equipped to determine what content is appropriate for their children. Moreover, all such regulatory ventures pose a threat to free speech. Regulations aimed at protecting children from “inappropriate” content often have a chilling effect on adult speech as well.

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