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May 31, 1994

The Honorable Claiborne Pell
418 Federal Building
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Senator Pell:

I am writing to express my concern at the antics of the American Family Association as they continue their attempts to censor the Public Broadcasting System. I'm sure you are well aware that public broadcasting stations, and the system itself, already suffer from a lack of funding which has hindered their presentation of interesting, challenging, and educational programming. WSBE-TV in Providence is indeed an extreme victim of cuts in funding.

I am most disturbed by the categorization of public broadcasting by the AFA as lacking of family values and offensive. It is true that some of PBS' offerings have been controversial, but I tend to think that controversy is healthy and good for society. There are many elements of society that have had a difficult time gaining representation in PBS programming, such as women and minorities and particularly gays and lesbians, and I think it's time that such programming was increased on PBS rather than decreased.

I recently watched the fine program "Tales of the City" on WGBH, presented as part of the "American Playhouse" series (which WSBE doesn't carry, due to budget cuts) and am incensed by the idea that "More Tales of the City" will not be run on PBS due to pressure from groups such as the AFA. I feel that my rights as a television viewer and as a taxpayer are being violated.

As such, I urge you to listen to ALL the viewers of PBS, not just fringe groups such as the American Family Association and its ilk who seek to censor public broadcasting in order present only their view of the world. There are many views of the world—isn't it fair that most, if not all, should be presented on PBS? Is that not what it is there for?

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I appreciate the work you do for Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Lin Collette