

1 **RESOLUTION URGING PARENTAL**
2 **OVERSIGHT OF CHILDREN WATCHING**
3 **MOVIES**

4 1998 GENERAL SESSION

5 STATE OF UTAH

6 **Sponsor: Scott N. Howell**

7 A RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE ENCOURAGING PARENTS TO EXERCISE
8 INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN FROM FILMS
9 INAPPROPRIATE FOR THEIR AGE; AND URGING PARENTS TO WORK WITH
10 THEATER OWNERS AND OPERATORS TO ENSURE THAT ATTENDANCE POLICIES
11 ON AGE-RESTRICTED FILMS ARE PROPERLY ENFORCED.

12 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the state of Utah:*

13 WHEREAS since the advent of the Motion Picture Association of America rating system
14 in 1968, nearly every film distributed in the United States has been submitted to the MPAA Rating
15 Board;

16 WHEREAS the board assigns ratings that are designed to help parents determine a film's
17 suitability for viewing by the their children;

18 WHEREAS the "R" and "NC-17" ratings go beyond simple advice, and place restrictions
19 on who may be admitted to a theater to view a film;

20 WHEREAS as co-founders of the rating system, the National Association of Theater
21 Owners and its members are bound to enforce the restrictions, which are that no one under 17 is
22 to be admitted to an R rated film without an accompanying parent or adult guardian, and that no
23 one under 17 is to be admitted to an NC-17 rated film under any circumstances;

24 WHEREAS the National Association of Theater Owners estimates that about 85% of the
25 theater owners in the United States subscribe to the rating system;

26 WHEREAS children under 17 routinely attend "R" rated movies either accompanied by
27 a parent or guardian, or at a theater where the restriction is not uniformly enforced;

1 WHEREAS studies show that when children see violence, they begin to feel it's normal to
2 be violent, and when they see graphic portrayals of adult sexuality, they begin to believe that is
3 how they should behave;

4 WHEREAS psychiatrists have documented that the behaviors of children traumatized by
5 graphic depictions of violence and sexuality in films are similar to those witnessed in children who
6 have been physically or sexually abused or who have lived in a war zone;

7 WHEREAS although parents who truly love their children would not willingly put them
8 into those real life situations, many do not realize their children can be at risk for such trauma at
9 the local theater;

10 WHEREAS the placement of age restrictions on Hollywood films made by major movie
11 stars and directors, and the use of phrases like "adults only" and "for mature audiences" often used
12 in the media to describe a film's intended audience, heightens its allure in the minds of youth
13 craving to be considered "adult" or "mature";

14 WHEREAS parents must lead out in monitoring and curbing, where necessary, the viewing
15 habits of their children to ensure that they are not exposed to this harmful material;

16 WHEREAS theater owners in Utah should assist parents by ensuring that their employees
17 are uniformly enforcing the age restrictions their association helped to create; and

18 WHEREAS when parents establish standards and boundaries the family does not
19 compromise, they fortify their children with the moral courage needed to stand firm against
20 negative forces in society:

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the state Utah urge parents
22 to exercise increased responsibility to protect their children from the harmful effects of films
23 inappropriate for their age.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate urge theater owners to ensure that
25 restrictions on the attendance at films are uniformly and consistently enforced.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the Utah Parent
27 Teachers Association, Cinemark USA Western Region Office, Cineplex-Odeon District Office,
28 and Carmike Cinemas Inc.

Legislative Review Note
as of 10-28-97 11:03 AM

A limited legal review of this bill raises no obvious constitutional or statutory concerns.

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel