



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

E Goodman
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Monday 4 February 2008

D. Mr. Goodman,

Thank you for your letter of January 30 regarding my Private Member's Bill. I understand your concerns on this matter – I am as concerned as you are about the creation of a “nanny-knows-best” state and have devoted the last four years (and my last Private Member's Bill) to fighting the health-and-safety culture in adventure and risk-based activities.

However, it would be foolish to ignore the impact of violent and sexually violent films on people's behaviour. Violent crime – particularly violence against women – is increasing steadily in the UK. A recent study by the universities of Glasgow and North London showed that half of young British males thought it acceptable, in one circumstance or another, to force a woman to have sex (you can find the report here: <http://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/upfiles/young%20peoples%20attitude%2085.pdf>).

The links to the media are also becoming increasingly apparent. In September, for example, the Ministry of Justice published a research paper (research series 11/07) which concludes that there is “clear and consistent [evidence that] exposure to pornography puts one at increased risk for ... committing sex offences... and accepting rape myths.” In December the University of Columbia brought out a fascinating study into the effect of violent films on the brain, which showed that watching such films reduced the activity of the brain network responsible for suppressing aggression.

The BBFC, and its appeals committee, are getting increasingly out of step with the realities of modern life. The Bill seeks to bring Parliamentary



scrutiny both to the process of selecting the principal officers of the Board and of determining changes to the guidelines used by BBFC examiners. I also plan to abolish the current appeals committee, which has consistently taken a much laxer line than even the BBFC, and replace it with a jury, drawn at random from a list of volunteers. Appeals, which currently can only be launched by the industry, could also be triggered by 50 MPs who feel a classification is too low. (In Australia *anyone* can appeal.)

In short the Bill will make the BBFC more accountable for the decisions they make. It does not seek to lay down the guidelines which the BBFC would make, nor does it prescribe which films should or shouldn't be shown. All it does is ensure that the Board has to defend its decisions and general direction, and opens up the ultimate appeal to a broader range of people.

Thank you for writing to me and allowing me the opportunity to explain my objectives.

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E. J.