



FILE

ALABAMA PTA

207 North Jackson Street • Montgomery, Alabama 36104-9990
Phone 834-2501 • In-State WATS (800) 328-1897

12 February 91

TO: STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RE: CHANNEL ONE PRESENTATION TO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The mailed Agenda for the February 14 meeting of the State Board of Education indicates that a representative of Channel One will be making a presentation. Although PTA is unaware of the nature of this presentation, we know that Whittle Education Network has recently started an Educator's Channel for classroom teachers of grades 6-12.

The Alabama PTA, like virtually every educational association, is opposed to Channel One. On the surface, Channel One doesn't seem like such a bad idea. Schools get free use of a satellite dish, a VCR, and television sets in return for airing a 12 minute news program containing two minutes of commercials. On closer inspection however Channel One is really a wolf in sheep's clothing. It's a marketing program for commercial sponsors to sell their wares to a captive teenage audience.

Those seemingly harmless two-minutes of commercials will take up more than a full day of school each year. Schools that show the program during home room claim no infringement of instruction time. This reasoning ignores that the public school day is paid for by tax dollars and should not be sold, be it home room or class room. Other programs are available without the commercials and restrictions of Channel One.

Although PTA is pleased about teachers receiving continuing education, we are displeased about Channel One tightening its grip on user school systems. Where is this leading - to three, four, or five minutes of advertising? Loosened editorial restrictions on advertising? Television editors designing curriculum? Will full-page advertisements for basketball shoes in junior high textbooks be the next step in selling public schools?

Selling classroom time is in the best interest of commercial sponsors, not children. (The State Board of Education wouldn't finance the video equipment in the State Department of Education by starting each meeting with fourteen minutes of Channel One required viewing. The Alabama school day should be no different.)



Frederic J. Hoerr, President