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 Julie Taylor, Children, Youth and Family Advocacy, Women's Division, United Methodist Church
 Rev. Romal J. Tune, CEO Clergy Strategic Alliances
 Jeff Weissglass, Board Chair, More Than Money Institute
 Frederick J. Zimmerman, PhD, Associate Professor, Departments of Health Services & Pediatrics, University of Washington; co-author, *The Elephant in the Living Room: Make Television Work for Your Kids*

School board members: Take a personal stand for commercial-free classrooms and school buses. You have a lot of support.

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Promoting what helps children, changing what harms them.

September 14th, 2006

Children's Advocates Ask Companies Not to Advertise on Bus Radio and Channel One

Children's advocates sent letters today to the 100 leading national advertisers and the top 50 advertising agencies, requesting that they pledge not to advertise on Bus Radio and Channel One, two companies that compel school children to watch or listen to advertising.

The letters were endorsed by 40 organizations and 64 children's advocates. **Endorsers include the American Family Association, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Consumers Union, Eagle Forum, Global Exchange and the National PTA, as well as the National Council of Churches Committee on Public Education and Literacy and the Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Child Advocacy.**

The letters are the first step in a new campaign organized by Commercial Alert, the Center for a New American Dream and Obligation, Inc.

Following is today's letter to the leading national advertisers and ad agencies.

Dear Corporate/Ad Agency Leader:

As you know, advertising is now commonplace in the public schools. Yet, many advertising and marketing professionals have deep misgivings about marketing to schoolchildren. According to a 2004 Harris poll of youth advertising and marketing professionals, only 45% "feel that today's young people can handle advertising in schools." Not surprisingly, 47% believe that "schools should be a protected area" and that "there should not be advertising to students on school grounds."

We are writing to ask for your help to turn your industry's conscience into a reality, and to protect our children and their education from aggressive marketers.

Channel One is a highly controversial in-school marketing company that delivers televised content to nearly 11,500 schools throughout the nation. In exchange for video equipment, these schools now spend one full school week each year watching television, including one full school day just for the ads. According to the Harris poll, 61% of youth marketing professionals believe that it is "inappropriate" for companies like Channel One to "provide instructional material that integrates brand names and products into the lessons."

Bus Radio is the newest foray of advertisers into public schools. It seeks to install special radio equipment into school buses that will carry that company's offerings, including eight minutes of ads per hour. In its contract with school districts, Bus Radio does not rule out advertising any particular type of products. If Channel One is any guide, we might expect Bus Radio to advertise junk food, soda pop, violent and sexualized entertainment, and movies that encourage school children to smoke tobacco.

Whatever Bus Radio advertises, children as young as six will have no choice as to whether to listen or not. Nor will their parents be able to exercise any control over their children's exposure. The sales pitches will fill the bus and interfere with those children who want to read, study, talk, pray, or do almost anything else other than listen to the programming. According to the Harris poll, 69% of youth advertising and marketing professionals believe that "advertising on school buses" is "inappropriate."

We agree with these professionals. We believe it is wrong for a company to use compulsory school attendance laws to force a captive audience of children to listen to advertising. As most practitioners in the field recognize, successful advertising depends on the willing participation of both advertiser and consumer. Bus Radio and Channel One violate this fundamental principle.

We are asking your [company/agency] to pledge by October 15 not to buy advertising on Bus Radio or Channel One. We hope you will join with us and affirm that school children should not be compelled to listen to or watch advertising.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Action Coalition for Media Education
Alliance for Childhood
American Family Association

California Center for Public Health Advocacy
Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood
Center for a New American Dream
Center for Community and Corporate Ethics
Center for Ecoliteracy
Center for Food & Justice, UEPI, Occidental College
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Center for Screen-Time Awareness
Children Now
Children's Health Environmental Coalition
Coalition for Commercial-Free Schools
Concerned Women for America
Commercial Alert
Consumer Action
Consumers Union
Corporate Ethics International
Dads & Daughters
Eagle Forum
Essential Action
Global Citizen
Center Global Exchange
Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids
Massachusetts Public Health Association
MomsRising
National Council of Churches Committee on Public Education and Literacy
National PTA
Obligation, Inc.
Organic Consumers Association
Parents' Action for Children
Simple Living Network
Sojourners
Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment (TRUCE)
The Motherhood Project
The Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Child Advocacy
The Simplicity Forum
Vermont Earth Institute

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