

**FEBRUARY 16, 2005**

**SCHAKOWSKY VOTES TO SHIELD  
FIRST AMENDMENT FROM CONGRESSIONAL INTRUSION**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today refused to join the overwhelming majority of Congress in voting for legislation she strongly believes would limit free speech and intrude on American's First Amendment rights. The House of Representatives voted to approve H.R. 310, a bill that would increase fines on broadcast licensees, networks and individuals found to have violated indecency regulations by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).**

**"There is already a law on the books that addresses indecency. We need to get a grip and not embrace a solution that could cause more harm than good. H.R 310 is one of those solutions," Schakowsky said.**

**"With this bill, Congress is putting Big Brother in charge of deciding what is art and what is free speech. If enacted, especially with the increased fines against individual artists, we will see self- and actual censorship reach new, undesirable heights," added Schakowsky, who is the ranking Democrat on the Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection Subcommittee.**

**Schakowsky said that "the threats to our Constitution and to artistic expression are all too real with H.R. 310." She pointed to 66 ABC affiliates that refused to air "Saving Private Ryan" in 2004 after the movie was shown on Veterans' Day in 2001 and 2002. Similar legislation to H.R. 310 was moving through Congress in 2004, the same year the affiliates declined to air the movie. "They were afraid that the award-winning salute to our veterans would be deemed indecent."**

**The bill fails to address the major concern of citizens across the country who believe that there is a direct correlation between media consolidation and the increasing number of objectionable materials on the air.**

**Schakowsky said, "I am concerned about the continuing refusal to address what is behind the decline in broadcasting - the over-concentration of media ownership. Broadcast content has been getting worse, not because of low fines and out-of-control**

**talent, but because of the shift away from local control to ownership by media-conglomerates that have no regard for the varying community standards."□□**

**"Much of the furor over indecency has been explained by a desire to protect our children.□ I agree that there are many programs on TV that are inappropriate for my grandchildren, particularly the many shows that depict graphic violence. I do not want H.R. 310 - or Big Brother - making that decision for me and their parents.□ I am much more concerned about the First Amendment than my grandchildren seeing Janet Jackson's nipple," Schakowsky concluded.**