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SCHAKOWSKY DENOUNCES ASSAULT ON FIRST AMENDMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-CA) today denounced the assault on the First Amendment and called this attack "an intrusion into the personal lives of every American."

□ Schakowsky spoke today on the House Floor against an amendment offered by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde (R-IL) during debate on the juvenile justice bill. □ She said, "Far from 'putting parents in charge', this Culture of Violence Amendment puts 'Big Brother' squarely in control of the games, art, movies, books, and other materials available to our children."

□ The amendment was defeated by a vote of 146 to 282.

□ Schakowsky said that this amendment is a frontal assault on the First Amendment rights of artists, sculptors, dancers and actors to create and share freely.

During her floor statement, Schakowsky added, "No work of art, magazine, or CD is exempt from government scrutiny. □ No sales clerk at Blockbuster Video, ticket seller at the movies, librarian, museum employee, or book-seller would be free from the threat of a jail term. □ In fact, even if the parent consents to the purchase of materials deemed too violent or obscene, that sales clerk is at risk."

"This is big government at its worst, supported it seems by the same individuals who rail against big government. □ It is an intrusion into the personal lives of every American, a threat to educational and artistic freedom, and a direct assault on the First Amendment. □ And above all, this amendment undercuts the freedom that is at the core of our American values," concluded Schakowsky.

This amendment could have conceivably banned children's access to such important movies as Schindler's List and Amistad, and works of literature such as Alice Walker's The Color Purple, William Golding's Lord of the Flies, and Alex Haley's Roots..

Justice John Marshall said that "one man's vulgarity is another man's lyric," which sums up the impossibility of developing legislation that will "protect" children from violence and sex while simultaneously protecting their rights. □