

Wednesday, November 5, 2008

Do not let government force television to dumb itself down to a child's level.

Â Bill of RightsÂ (From public domain.)Â Why listen to government/FCC-censored broadcast radio and television when we have the choice to listen to satellite and online radio and to watch cable television? Â Why listen to broadcast radio and television when the FCC might still get upheld in court for heavily fining a station for broadcasting Allen Ginsberg's Howl masterpiece during prime time, or even a fleeting expletive by a winner at an awards ceremony or a successful player in a sporting event? Â Yesterday's Supreme CourtÂ oral argument in the F.C.C. v. Fox TelevisionÂ broadcast indecency case gives insight into such justices as Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Scalia, who seem to have no problem with heavy F.C.C. fines for the use of the words f_ck and sh_t during primetime on broadcast television. Justice Ginsburg showed skepticism about permitting the F.C.C. to skewer the use of such words in such a blanket fashion, and Justice Stevens underlined how silly it is to be punishing mere words so harshly. Â Of course, you need not wait for the Supreme Court to decide this case. You always can insist that your U.S. Congressmembers insert First Amendment teeth to replace the F.C.C.'s constant urination on First Amendment rights by looking for sh_t and f_ck words all over the place on the taxpayers' backs. Will youÂ make such a move?Â Jon Katz.Â

Posted by Jon Katz in First Amendment at 00:00