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Super Bowl Ad Controversy
**CBS GUILTY OF POLITICAL FAVORITISM
IN REJECTING MOVEON.ORG VOTER FUND AD**

***Network Allows White House Anti-drug Ad
As it Lobbies for Favors from Bush and Congress***

Public Asked to Contact CBS Local Stations to Protest

CBS Television and its parent company Viacom are guilty of political favoritism in its selective enforcement of network policies governing advertising around the Super Bowl, MoveOn.org charged today.

CBS notified the MoveOn.org Voter Fund that it will not allow the winning spot from the organization's recent "Bush in 30 Seconds" TV ad contest to be aired during the annual football extravaganza, which is expected to draw 130 million viewers in the U.S. and a billion worldwide. The network claims to have a long-standing policy against running issue ads that may be controversial.

According to trade sources, an issue ad by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy will be aired during the football game – but not the MOVF ad, "Child's Pay," which focuses on the ballooning federal deficit. An ad from People for Ethical Treatment of Animals also was rejected. Previous White House anti-drug ads broadcast during the Super Bowl stirred controversy by linking drug use to support for international terrorism.

"It seems to us that CBS simply defers to those it fears or from whom it wants favors – in this case, the Bush White House," said Eli Pariser, campaign director for MoveOn.org. "This is the same CBS that recently backed down when the Republican National Committee made a stink about its mini-series on former President Reagan and his family.

"And this is the same CBS that has lobbied hard and will benefit from recent changes by Congress in Federal Communications Commission restrictions on the ownership of local TV stations," he noted.

Yesterday Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) made a similar point, noting that CBS and Fox networks would have been forced to sell stations they owned had not Congress made the change both networks and the White House wanted: allowing one owner to reach up to

39% of the total national broadcast audience. “Why did they pick 39%? So these two conglomerates could be grandfathered,” McCain, who chairs a committee overseeing the industry, said on the Senate floor.

Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle called the change “a special interest giveaway that directly harms the national interest.”

The MoveOn.org Voter Fund ad states one undeniable fact: that Bush, by creating a huge federal deficit, is leaving a painful legacy to future generations. The ad, created by Charlie Fisher of Denver in a nationwide competition where more than 100,000 members of the public voted, pictures children doing difficult work – washing dishes in a restaurant, cleaning an office building, hauling trash, standing on an assembly line – with the tag line: “*Guess Who’s Going to Pay Off President Bush’s \$1 Trillion Deficit?*”

It’s a position that has bipartisan support. Yesterday 40 House Republicans kicked off a campaign to pressure the White House to reduce its deficit spending. Democrats have attacked the president in the presidential primary campaigns, accusing him of reckless tax policies creating a spiraling debt.

MoveOn.org called on the public to contact local CBS affiliates and ask them to run all issue ads, without favoritism. MOVF received support yesterday from an unlikely source. Fox network curmudgeon Bill O’Reilly commented: “I was surprised that CBS turned this down. It’s not offensive, makes a legitimate point politically.”

MoveOn.org is an online organizing project created to bring ordinary people back into the political process through its focus on public education and advocacy around important national issues. The MoveOn.org Voter Fund is a “Section 527” political committee created to comply with the new federal campaign finance laws. It run ads and engages in other efforts to expose the policy failures of the Bush Administration. MoveOn.org is mounting this protest as a nonpartisan effort on behalf of all public interest groups seeking fair and open access to the media – not just its Voter Fund.