



BILL HORN

**SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: December 9, 2008

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: REQUIRING PARENTAL CONSENT FOR MINORS TO CHECK OUT "R"
RATED DVDS AND VIDEOS FROM SAN DIEGO COUNTY LIBRARIES
(DISTRICTS: ALL)

SUMMARY:

Overview

The County of San Diego currently operates and maintains 33 library branches and two bookmobiles which have ably served local cities and communities for decades. Providing a place for San Diego County residents of all ages to access a wide range of informative materials, the County Library system is a valuable supplement to our educational system and facilities and is a symbol of our ongoing commitment to improving self-directed learning and community education.

It has always been the County's policy to permit library patrons of all ages to access all available library materials. Included in these materials are DVDs and videos which have been given an "R" rating by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). Given that these DVDs and videos are available for minors to check out, it is the County's responsibility to ensure that parents are made aware of and consent to this policy. Ultimately, protecting a child from viewing inappropriate material is a parent's responsibility, but the County Board of Supervisors ought to support parents who take that responsibility seriously. That is why creating a sensible and fair policy requiring active rather than passive parental consent before allowing minors to access DVDs and videos which have been given an "R" rating by the MPAA should be developed. In order to assist parents or guardians in exercising their right to decide whether or not their child under the age of 18 will have access to R-rated DVD's and videocassettes, the County proposes just such an option. Parents or guardians who wish to restrict access to R-rated video materials for their children are able to check the appropriate box on their child's library card application.

The following recommendation will direct the Chief Administrative Officer to investigate creating a new library card application for children which clearly states the County Library DVD and video check out policy and will provide an option for

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restricting their child’s access to R-rated videos.

Recommendation(s)

SUPERVISOR HORN:

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to pinpoint the costs and the recommendations which would be necessary to implement the following items, and to report to the Board of Supervisors within 60 days.

1. Create a new library card application which clearly states the County Library DVD and video check out policy and will provide an option for restricting their child’s access to R-rated videos.
2. Require that a parent must check the appropriate box on their child’s library card application to restrict their child under the age of 18 from checking out film titles at the library of any film given a rating of “R” by the Motion Picture Association of America.

Fiscal Impact

To be determined.

Business Impact Statement

N/A

Advisory Board Statement

N/A

BACKGROUND:

The County of San Diego currently operates and maintains 33 library branches and two bookmobiles which have ably served local cities and communities for decades. Providing a place for San Diego County residents of all ages to access a wide range of informative materials, the County Library system is a valuable supplement to our educational system and facilities and is a symbol of our ongoing commitment to improving education and learning.

It has always been the County’s policy to permit library patrons of all ages to access all available library materials. All children under the age of 18 must have a parent’s permission in order to obtain a library card. Given that County Library branches make DVD’s and videos which have been given an “R” rating by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) available for children to check out, it is the County’s responsibility to ensure that parents are made aware of and actively consent to this policy.

Currently parents provide passive consent to allowing their children to peruse and check out “R” rated film titles when the child’s library card agreement is signed. However, the County Library Internet policy, created when the Board of Supervisors on my recommendation began to require parents to provide a signature before their child can access the Internet, implies a need for parents to provide active rather than passive consent in order to prevent their child from viewing material inappropriate for their age. Parents must read and sign the Internet Parental Consent Form to

SUBJECT: Requiring parental consent for minors to check out “R” rated DVDs and videos from San Diego County Libraries.

authorize their children under the age of 18 to use the Internet. Children under the age of 18 must sign the “Responsible User” statement at the bottom of the Internet Parental Consent Form. This form must be completed and signed by both parent and child in the library.

Clearly Internet content cannot be controlled by the County, which is why commercial Internet filters are installed to prevent the viewing of obscene or pornographic material by library patrons. In contrast, the County controls the content of its library collections in all formats by making purchasing decisions based on the selection criteria in the County’s Collection Development Policy. The County does not purchase DVDs that are considered to be obscene or pornographic. However, an “R” rating is widely considered to be indicative of adult content, and the County does not have any policies in place that restrict a child’s access to these videos or DVDs at this time.

Linkage to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan

[Click [here](#) & type]

Respectfully submitted,

BILL HORN
Supervisor, Fifth District

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

CONCURRENCE(S)

COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Written Disclosure per County Charter Section 1000.1 Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY FINANCE DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Requires Four Votes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
COUNTY TECHNOLOGY OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Other Concurrence(s):

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Supervisor Bill Horn

CONTACT PERSON(S):

Chris Champine	
_____ Name	_____ Name
(619) 531-5555	
_____ Phone	_____ Phone
_____ Fax	_____ Fax
A 500	
_____ Mail Station	_____ Mail Station
_____ E-mail	_____ E-mail

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: _____

SUBJECT: Requiring parental consent for minors to check out “R” rated DVDs and videos from San Diego County Libraries.

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET
(continued)

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:

[Click **here** and type action(s), or type N/A if not applicable]

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:

[Click **here** and type applicable policies, or type N/A if not applicable]

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:

[Click **here** and type required statement(s), or type N/A if not applicable]

CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):

[Click **here** and type numbers, or type N/A if not applicable]

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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT: [Click [here](#) and type]

PROGRAM: [Click [here](#) and type]

PROPOSAL: [Click [here](#) and type]

FUTURE YEARS ESTIMATED BUDGET OF PROPOSAL IF ADOPTED				
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Budgeted Amount For Proposal	Proposed Change in Budgeted Amount	Proposed Revised Current Year Budget (a+b)	1st Subsequent Year	2nd Subsequent Year
Direct Cost				
Revenue/Other Offset				
NET GENERAL FUND COST				
Staff Years				

Sources of Revenue/Other Offset for Proposed Change and Subsequent Years:

Space-Related Impacts: Will this proposal result in any additional space requirements? Yes N/A

Support/Other Departmental Impacts: Yes N/A

Remarks: Yes N/A