



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 6, 2011

NBC Cancels “The Playboy Club”

Following a full-tilt campaign by a coalition of pro-family, anti-porn, and decency organizations, NBC made the decision to pull the plug on its highly promoted fall drama *The Playboy Club*. In its first cancellation of the season, the network made its move “less than 24 hours after the new series drew only 3.5 million people for its third episode,” reported *Access Hollywood*. The industry insider report noted that the ill-advised series “started weak, with 5 million viewers for its first episode, and didn’t improve.”



Even before its debut, reported by *The New American*, the show had come under an intense assault from a group called the [Coalition for the War on Illegal Pornography](#), which charged that the show was little more than prime-time porn that should never be aired. The coalition was made up of such groups as Focus on the Family, the Alliance Defense Fund, the Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America, and the American Family Association, among others, whose leaders issued a stern condemnation, declaring that “NBC is contributing to the sexual objectification and exploitation of women and encouraging greater acceptance of pornography with its soon-to-be-aired series.”

Following the show’s September debut, the Parents Television Council (PTC) noted its poor ratings, which, it said, meant that “the American people, by and large, agree that the Playboy brand does not belong in prime time....” The conservative TV watchdog group also targeted the episode’s sponsors, Chrysler and Unilever (which owns, among other brands, Hellmann’s Mayonnaise), asking its pro-family partners to “hold these companies accountable for their role in pushing the Playboy brand into every living room in America....”

PTC charged that every company “that sponsored the premiere episode of *The Playboy Club* is complicit in the act of mainstreaming pornography. With Playboy spelled out blatantly in the show title, no advertiser can claim to be surprised.” The group added that the Playboy brand is all about “promoting a narrow, and for most women, unattainable ideal of feminine beauty; it’s about reducing a woman to a set of measurements to the exclusion of everything else. It’s a brand that owns the Spice Digital Networks, purveyors of hardcore pornography. It’s a brand that seeks to lure young girls through pink, sparkly, bunny logo merchandise that is often shelved alongside Hello Kitty products.”

Charging that the *Playboy Club*’s advertisers were “helping to make adults-only material available in virtually every living room in the country,” PTC offered individuals and families an e-mail platform to contact sponsors and demand that they “defend your decision to underwrite a program that is helping to push pornography into the mainstream.” Added the e-mail: “Without the advertising dollars of companies like yours, programs like *The Playboy Club* could not exist.”

Following the program’s cancellation, PTC’s president, Tim Winter, applauded the pro-family victory, saying that bringing the show to prime-time TV “was a poor programming decision from the start. We’re pleased that NBC will no longer be airing a program so inherently linked to a pornographic brand



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that denigrates and sexualizes women.”

Another of the group’s spokesmen, Dan Issett, said NBC’s decision to cancel the show after just three episodes demonstrated the power of grassroots activism by concerned citizens. “The show would still be on the air if people hadn’t stood up and spoken out to the sponsors of the show,” Issett told [OneNewsNow](#). “So there’s a lot of credit that needs to be given to people around the country who made the simple step of just letting their opinion be known about this.”

Dawn Hawkins, whose organization, [Morality in Media](#), led the coalition against The Playboy Club, said the show’s quick cancellation was proof that the American public is “not interested in supporting the brand that normalized pornography and caused immeasurable harm to women, children, and to the men who became addicted to porn.”

The [New York Times](#) reported that The Playboy Club will be replaced by a news program, [Rock Center with Brian Williams](#), which it said “had been rumored for weeks to be in rapid production mode to get ready to fill the slot where ‘Playboy’ was languishing. On [October 4th], NBC made the switch, announcing that the new program would occupy the 10 p.m. slot on Mondays beginning Oct. 31.”



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