March 4, 2014

Lowell C. McAdam  
Chief Executive Officer  
Verizon Communications  
140 W St  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. McAdam:

We are writing you to express concern regarding your distribution of hardcore, possibly obscene pornography on Verizon FIOS television and ask you to stop distributing such material. We ask you to do this as a matter of conscience, to avoid sexual exploitation as a means of profit. We also ask you to consider that you may be violating U.S. law, 18 U.S. Code Section 1468, which prohibits distribution of obscene matter by means of cable television or subscription services on television.

Shortly, Morality in Media will publicly announce the “Dirty Dozen List,” which we produce annually and contains the top promoters of pornography in America. After careful consideration, we have decided that Verizon deserves to be on that list.

We would like to ask you a few questions, Mr. McAdam, and perhaps you could share these questions with your corporate staff and board of directors because they relate to Verizon’s corporate responsibility and to Verizon’s impact on the coarsening of our nation’s culture:

1. Currently, Verizon FIOS offers for rent a hardcore pornographic video titled, “Gang Bang Sex Slaves.” Are you, your staff, and the Verizon board of directors aware of the tragic nature of sex trafficking in America? If so, do you believe that Verizon should profit from pornographic films that promote sexual slavery?

2. Currently, Verizon FIOS offers for rent numerous hardcore pornography videos with teen or child themes such as, “Pigtail Teens Pounded,” “I Banged My Stepdad,” “Mom, Daughter, and Me,” “I Did the Babysitter,” “After School Panties,” and “Young Amateur Teens.” Do you believe that Verizon should profit from pornographic films that promote child sex abuse and incest?
3. Currently, Verizon FIOS offers for rent hardcore pornographic videos with offensive ethnic titles such as “massive Black Butts,” “Inside Asian Teens,” “Latina Teen Newbies.” What is your corporate policy on race relations?

We also note that pornography is available to all your customers through your Internet services unless a consumer takes affirmative action to block such material through your parental controls. As you may be aware, in the United Kingdom and in other countries, an “opt-in” proposal is being discussed and is very popular with consumers. Such a provision would require Internet service providers to block pornography unless a consumer exercises an option to “opt-in” for such material. If Verizon would take the lead in this country in offering such a proposal we believe you would find very large customer base of support.

At Morality in Media we believe that all children, women, and men have a natural human dignity and thus a right to live in a decent society; and as the Supreme Court has recognized, obscene materials, which are inherently degrading, dehumanizing, and exploitive, violate this right. Morality in Media exists to make society aware of the many harms of pornography; to equip individuals and families to overcome or protect against those harms; and, to advocate that all laws defending the right to be free from pornography are vigorously enforced.

Not only does pornography exploit, degrade and dehumanize the people in the films and photos, but it exploits, degrades and dehumanizes the people exposed to it, teaching them to view others as merely objects for selfish pleasure.

Our nation is now suffering an untreated pandemic of harm from the widespread distribution of pornography and Verizon bears great responsibility for that harm.

Adults, and even children, are developing life-long addictions to pornography. Sexual violence against women, including rape, and sexual harassment of women are directly tied to the consumption of pornography. On average, American children are first exposed to pornography at age 11 and many act out what they see in hardcore pornography; four out of five 16 year-olds now regularly access pornography online and many are developing life-long social/sexual problems as a result. 56% of matrimonial lawyers cited obsessive interest in pornographic websites as a factor in divorce cases they handled in the previous year. There is increased demand for child pornography because adult-porn users are finding that they are no longer excited by adult images – and pornography is a contributing factor in the increased demand for sex-trafficked women and children in the U.S.

A wealth of peer-reviewed research demonstrates the many other harms of pornography. We maintain a database of such studies at PornHarmsResearch.com.

We also have many testimonials from people formerly caught up in the pornography industry, of being exploited, given illicit drugs, coerced to perform objectionable acts and therefore sexually trafficked in violation of the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

It may be easy to detach from the issue and consider pornography as a mere profitable part of modern life – but only by avoiding common sense. We at Morality in Media have
dedicated countless hours to researching pornography and promoting awareness to its many devastating harms and thus we urge you to consider a different course.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with your representatives to discuss this matter at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Patrick A. Trueman  
President & CEO

Dawn Hawkins  
Executive Director