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MG: Mudgeon on Games *by Mudgeon*

Time for Gamers to Stir Themselves

In case you had NOT heard, three representatives in our federal government have decided to apply pressure on major retailers, "requesting" the retailers to only buy software from publishers and developers who comply with the Interactive Digital Software Association's (IDSA) video and computer game rating system. Once again, the effrontery of our elected officials in their interference with commerce and our right to rule our own lives is taking another step forward.

Who are these mighty bastions of what's right and what's wrong, who dare to officially attempt to intimidate businesses? None other than Herb Kohl of Wisconsin, Tom Lantos of California, and Tom Liebermann of Connecticut. You want to know what the IDSA plan is? EVERY publisher (and, yep, folks, that includes SHAREWARE developers and publishers) must submit their game AND \$500 to the IDSA to have their title reviewed by their all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful ratings committee. Disgusting! Once again, delegation of parental/guardian responsibilities in ensuring their children play video and computer games suited for their temperament and household is being assaulted by elected officials who forget WE are THEIR bosses. In fact, should you recall, Inside Games Update addressed this reprehensible plan many issues ago. Now it seems as though public outrage was not significant enough to halt this denigration of our freedoms.

Lantos initiated this campaign. He called Mortal Kombat "filthy and disgusting." He wants to "protect our children." I am pretty sure the word "our" is a possessive pronoun and I can damned well assure Mr. Lantos that he is not responsible for one single ounce of fatherhood with any of my offspring. I don't want Lantos or the Federal government stepping into my role and determining what my children may, or may not, play--what they may, or may not, enjoy.

Perhaps to some of you, this ain't no big deal. The IRS, when income taxes were first instituted in the 20s, wasn't thought of being a big deal, either. Nor was the little lie that birthed the Vietnam War. Or the fibs that attempted to conceal Watergate. Aren't we fed up yet with our elected officials determining for us what should, and should not, be? Aren't we just sick and tired of their omnipresent attitude, their godhead, their ability to know what's best for most U.S. citizens that are too ignorant to know any better? Yep, some of you are saying that no way does this represent anything as ominous or perilous as a regional war. No one's gonna lose lives. You're probably right, but this is just another one of those nibbles at the periphery of our lives by the government. Just another of our "freedoms" slowly being eked away from us by do-gooder federales who don't need no stinkin' badges, just letters on Congressional letterhead to intimidate private business with the implied threat of federal interference.

I strongly recommend you inform your local, county or parish, state, and federal representative that you

are offended by their intelligencia-interruptus. You don't need them telling you what you may or may not do in your own home. Go tell them to work on something important, like a stable and credible foreign policy, lowering the national debt, and leave gamers to their own devices. Seems to me we've been able to determine how best to decide if a game is worthwhile or not--it's called gross sales. If something really stinks, we don't buy it. P'raps politicians better realize we believe something stinks in Washington and, just mebbe, we won't buy their drivel anymore!--Mudgeon

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