

ROGER F. WICKER

MISSISSIPPI

ARMED SERVICES

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

COMMISSION ON SECURITY

AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

SUITE 555

DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

(202) 224-6253

www.wicker.senate.gov

Mr. William J. Abbott
President and Chief Executive Officer
Crown Media Holdings, Inc.
12700 Ventura Blvd
Studio City, CA 91604

Dear Mr. Abbott,

On March 31, 2019, Pure Flix's film *Unplanned* opened nationwide. The film is based on the true story of Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood clinic director, who left the organization to become a pro-life activist.¹

It has been reported that the Hallmark Channel of Crown Media Holdings, Inc. refused to air advertisements for *Unplanned* due to the "sensitive nature" of the film.² It has also been reported that efforts to market the movie "have been consistently rebuffed by TV networks."³ Amid myriad claims of media platforms silencing conservative voices, I am deeply troubled by these reports.

In today's media marketplace, media platforms – of all types – offer critical forms of communication for Americans to connect, share information, and interact with content. Despite the constantly-evolving media landscape, traditional and new forms of media have a responsibility to remain a reliable and trusted source for viewers and users who want to be informed about local commercial activity.

Based upon concerns raised by these reports please respond to the following:

- 1) What policies, procedures, and/or guidelines does your network have in place related to advertising on the network?
- 2) How long have those policies, procedures, and/or guidelines been in place?
- 3) How were those policies, procedures, and/or guidelines followed with respect to proposed advertisements for *Unplanned* on your network?

¹ Josh Terry, *Movie review: In graphic 'Unplanned,' a Planned Parenthood supervisor changes her mind*, April 1, 2019, Deseret News, available at <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900063389/movie-review-unplanned-pureflix-a-planned-parenthood-supervisor-changes-her-mind-pro-life-abortion.html>

² Paul Bond, *TV Networks Reject Ads for Anti-Abortion Movie*, The Hollywood Reporter, March 29, 2019, available at <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/etworks-reject-ads-anti-abortion-movie-unplanned-1197928>.

³ *Id.*

- 4) Was *Unplanned's* advertising representative given the option of modifying the advertisement to be in compliance with your network's advertising policies, procedures, and/or guidelines? Why or why not?
- 5) What training do you provide to your advertising team or other employees responsible for determining which advertisements to accept or prohibit on your network?
- 6) Please provide a copy to the Committee of the policies, procedures, and/or guidelines your network uses when considering advertisements.
- 7) Has your network ever aired advertisements purchased by Planned Parenthood?
- 8) Has your network ever aired advertisements, programs, or other content in support of Planned Parenthood?
- 9) Has your network ever aired advertisements for R-rated films or for television programs rated TV-MA?

Please provide the requested information as soon as possible, but no later than April 19, 2019. In addition, please arrange for your staff to brief my staff on this issue by May 3, 2019. If you have any questions, please have your staff contact Samantha Elleson of my staff at (202) 224-6253. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Senator

Mr. David Zaslav
President and Chief Executive Officer
Discovery, Inc.
1 Discovery Place
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Zaslav,

On March 31, 2019, Pure Flix's film *Unplanned* opened nationwide. The film is based on the true story of Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood clinic director, who left the organization to become a pro-life activist.¹

It has been reported that Home and Garden Tele Vision (HGTV), Travel Channel, and the Food Network of Discovery Inc. refused to air advertisements for *Unplanned* "due to the sensitive nature of the film."² It has also been reported that efforts to market the movie "have been consistently rebuffed by TV networks."³ Amid myriad claims of media platforms silencing conservative voices, I am deeply troubled by these reports.

In today's media marketplace, media platforms – of all types – offer critical forms of communication for Americans to connect, share information, and interact with content. Despite the constantly-evolving media landscape, traditional and new forms of media have a responsibility to remain a reliable and trusted source for viewers and users who want to be informed about local commercial activity.

Based upon concerns raised by these reports please respond to the following:

- 1) What policies, procedures, and/or guidelines does your network have in place related to advertising on the network?
- 2) How long have those policies, procedures, and/or guidelines been in place?
- 3) How were those policies, procedures, and/or guidelines followed with respect to proposed advertisements for *Unplanned* on your network?

¹ Josh Terry, *Movie review: In graphic 'Unplanned,' a Planned Parenthood supervisor changes her mind*, April 1, 2019, Deseret News, available at <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900063389/movie-review-unplanned-pureflix-a-planned-parenthood-supervisor-changes-her-mind-pro-life-abortion.html>

² Paul Bond, *TV Networks Reject Ads for Anti-Abortion Movie*, The Hollywood Reporter, March 29, 2019, available at <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/networks-reject-ads-anti-abortion-movie-unplanned-1197928>.

³ *Id.*

- 4) Was *Unplanned's* advertising representative given the option of modifying the advertisement to be in compliance with your network's advertising policies, procedures, and/or guidelines? Why or why not?
- 5) What training do you provide to your advertising team or other employees responsible for determining which advertisements to accept or prohibit on your network?
- 6) Please provide a copy to the Committee of the policies, procedures, and/or guidelines your network uses when considering advertisements.
- 7) Has your network ever aired advertisements purchased by Planned Parenthood?
- 8) Has your network ever aired advertisements, programs, or other content in support of Planned Parenthood?
- 9) Has your network ever aired advertisements for R-rated films or for television programs rated TV-MA?

Please provide the requested information as soon as possible, but no later than April 19, 2019. In addition, please arrange for your staff to brief Committee staff on this issue by May 3, 2019. If you have any questions, please have your staff contact Samantha Elleson of my staff at (202) 224-6253. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Chairman

ROGER F. WICKER

MISSISSIPPI

ARMED SERVICES

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

COMMISSION ON SECURITY

AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

SUITE 555

DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

(202) 224-6253

www.wicker.senate.gov

Mr. Paul Buccieri
President
A&E Networks Group
235 East 45th Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Buccieri,

On March 31, 2019, Pure Flix's film *Unplanned* opened nationwide. The film is based on the true story of Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood clinic director, who left the organization to become a pro-life activist.¹

It has been reported that the Lifetime Network refused to air advertisements for *Unplanned* "due to the sensitive nature of the film."² It has also been reported that efforts to market the movie "have been consistently rebuffed by TV networks."³ Amid myriad claims of media platforms silencing conservative voices, I am deeply troubled by these reports.

In today's media marketplace, media platforms – of all types – offer critical forms of communication for Americans to connect, share information, and interact with content. Despite the constantly-evolving media landscape, traditional and new forms of media have a responsibility to remain a reliable and trusted source for viewers and users who want to be informed about local commercial activity.

Based upon concerns raised by these reports please respond to the following:

- 1) What policies, procedures, and/or guidelines does your network have in place related to advertising on the network?
- 2) How long have those policies, procedures, and/or guidelines been in place?
- 3) How were those policies, procedures, and/or guidelines followed with respect to proposed advertisements for *Unplanned* on your network?

¹ Josh Terry, *Movie review: In graphic 'Unplanned,' a Planned Parenthood supervisor changes her mind*, April 1, 2019, Deseret News, available at <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900063389/movie-review-unplanned-pureflix-a-planned-parenthood-supervisor-changes-her-mind-pro-life-abortion.html>

² Paul Bond, *TV Networks Reject Ads for Anti-Abortion Movie*, The Hollywood Reporter, March 29, 2019, available at <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/networks-reject-ads-anti-abortion-movie-unplanned-1197928>.

³ *Id.*

- 4) Was *Unplanned's* advertising representative given the option of modifying the advertisement to be in compliance with your network's advertising policies, procedures, and/or guidelines? Why or why not?
- 5) What training do you provide to your advertising team or other employees responsible for determining which advertisements to accept or prohibit on your network?
- 6) Please provide a copy to the Committee of the policies, procedures, and/or guidelines your network uses when considering advertisements.
- 7) Has your network ever aired advertisements purchased by Planned Parenthood?
- 8) Has your network ever aired advertisements, programs, or other content in support of Planned Parenthood?
- 9) Has your network ever aired advertisements for R-rated films or for television programs rated TV-MA?

Please provide the requested information as soon as possible, but no later than April 19, 2019. In addition, please arrange for your staff to brief my staff on this issue by May 3, 2019. If you have any questions, please have your staff contact Samantha Elleson of my staff at (202) 224-6253. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Senator

ROGER F. WICKER

MISSISSIPPI

ARMED SERVICES

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

COMMISSION ON SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

SUITE 555

DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

(202) 224-6253

www.wicker.senate.gov

Ms. Kay Koplovitz
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
USA Network
300 New Jersey Avenue, Northwest
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Koplovitz,

On March 31, 2019, Pure Flix's film *Unplanned* opened nationwide. The film is based on the true story of Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood clinic director, who left the organization to become a pro-life activist.¹

It has been reported that USA Network refused to air advertisements for *Unplanned* "due to the sensitive nature of the film."² It has also been reported that efforts to market the movie "have been consistently rebuffed by TV networks."³ Amid myriad claims of media platforms silencing conservative voices, I am deeply troubled by these reports.

In today's media marketplace, media platforms – of all types – offer critical forms of communication for Americans to connect, share information, and interact with content. Despite the constantly-evolving media landscape, traditional and new forms of media have a responsibility to remain a reliable and trusted source for viewers and users who want to be informed about local commercial activity.

Based upon concerns raised by these reports please respond to the following:

- 1) What policies, procedures, and/or guidelines does your network have in place related to advertising on the network?
- 2) How long have those policies, procedures, and/or guidelines been in place?
- 3) How were those policies, procedures, and/or guidelines followed with respect to proposed advertisements for *Unplanned* on your network?

¹ Josh Terry, *Movie review: In graphic 'Unplanned,' a Planned Parenthood supervisor changes her mind*, April 1, 2019, Deseret News, available at <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900063389/movie-review-unplanned-pureflix-a-planned-parenthood-supervisor-changes-her-mind-pro-life-abortion.html>

² Paul Bond, *TV Networks Reject Ads for Anti-Abortion Movie*, The Hollywood Reporter, March 29, 2019, available at <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/networks-reject-ads-anti-abortion-movie-unplanned-1197928>.

³ *Id.*

- 4) Was *Unplanned's* advertising representative given the option of modifying the advertisement to be in compliance with your network's advertising policies, procedures, and/or guidelines? Why or why not?
- 5) What training do you provide to your advertising team or other employees responsible for determining which advertisements to accept or prohibit on your network?
- 6) Please provide a copy to the Committee of the policies, procedures, and/or guidelines your network uses when considering advertisements.
- 7) Has your network ever aired advertisements purchased by Planned Parenthood?
- 8) Has your network ever aired advertisements, programs, or other content in support of Planned Parenthood?
- 9) Has your network ever aired advertisements for R-rated films or for television programs rated TV-MA?

Please provide the requested information as soon as possible, but no later than April 19, 2019. In addition, please arrange for your staff to brief my staff on this issue by May 3, 2019. If you have any questions, please have your staff contact Samantha Elleson of my staff at (202) 224-6253. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Senator