

From the Journal Standard

Governor makes play to gaming industry

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The issue: Violent and sexually explicit video games

Our view: Some games should be kept out of the children's hands.

With his proposal to make Illinois the first state to ban the distribution, sale and rental of violent and sexually explicit video games to kids under 18, Gov. Rod Blagojevich may have found himself an issue on which he and Republicans can agree.

While some have dismissed Blagojevich's proposal as a media stunt, we see it as a positive effort to do something about games such as "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas," which, despite its explicit sexual content and glorification of violence, has been called by many who should know better the best video game of 2004.

For his part, Blagojevich said his motivation for video game regulation is rooted in his experience as a parent, rather than a politician. "I have two children, and other parents understand how children can change your life," the governor told the Chicago Sun-Times.

The proposal is a good one, especially given the proliferation of violent video games and the fact that many of them inevitably end up in the hands of kids, despite the "mature" ratings on the boxes. Studies of developing young minds confirm a relationship between graphic "first-person shooter" games and aggressive behavior. For that reason, these games are far more dangerous than R-Rated movies, which are banned for anyone under 17.

Parents are a big part of the problem. Too many, we fear, either tolerate such games, or never bother to find out what's in them while kids with televisions - 77 percent of all teens, according to a recent study - do whatever they want behind closed doors.

Such a law also would send a clear - and long overdue - message to the gaming industry about its responsibility to our nation's children.