

Former ban on broadcast indecency revived

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Government regulators are returning to their policy banning indecency on the airwaves between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m., the agency said yesterday in response to a court ruling that threw out broader rules.

In rejecting an extension of the ban until midnight, the federal appeals court was directing the Federal Communications Commission to "fine tune" its regulations, interim Chairman James Quello said.

"The court recognized that the

government has a compelling interest in regulating broadcast indecency to protect children but found that neither Congress nor the commission has properly balanced the government's interest against the interests of older minors and adults to have access to indecent materials on the broadcast medium," he said.

The return to the old policy represents no practical change, since the agency had held up the new rules and has been "enforcing 6 a.m.-to-8 p.m. all along," pending the court decision, Quello said.

The U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals

for the District of Columbia ruled Tuesday that the agency went too far when it banned indecent material on radio and TV between 6 a.m. and midnight.

It's unclear whether the ruling affects efforts to curb TV violence.

The agency defines broadcast indecency as language or material that "depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory activities or organs." Obscene material is banned from the airwaves at all times.

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