

NEWS FROM Legislator

Lou D'Amaro



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Turn Off and Tune In! Leg. D'Amaro Urges Families to Participate in National Screen-Free Week

HUNTINGTON STATION, NY... April 18, 2012) – Today's youth spend almost 11 hours in front of a television, telephone or computer screen every day and by the time they are 30 years old, they will have spent 10 years of their lives watching television. In an effort to reverse this trend, Suffolk County Legislator Lou D'Amaro (D-Huntington Station) is joining with The Early Years Institute (Plainview, NY) to invite families to join the Campaign for Commercial Free Childhood's (CCFC) 2nd Annual Screen-Free Week, an initiative whereby participants pledge to turn off electronic entertainment for seven days and explore other ways to learn and play.

Screen-Free Week, scheduled for April 30-May 6, 2012, is a national campaign aimed to reduce the time children and adults spend using TVs, computers, video games and hand-held devices. Participants sign a pledge to turn off all electronic devices and are provided with a host of alternative ways to foster creative activity. In addition to Legislator D'Amaro and The Early Years Institute, local businesses, schools, libraries, community organizations, child care centers, museums and pediatricians both locally and throughout the United States are all supporting these family-friendly efforts.

(more)

According to the Early Years Institute:

- Children spend more time using screen media than any other activity besides sleep;
- American children between the ages of two and six spend an average of four hours per day being entertained passively by screens;
- The American Pediatrics Association recommends that children under two years old watch NO television. Over a third (36%) of American Children under two have televisions in their rooms;
- Kids between two and 11 view more than 25,000 commercials each year;
- Children do not understand advertising's persuasive intent until they are about eight years old and very young children cannot distinguish between commercials and program content;
- Companies spend about \$17 billion annually marketing to children, a staggering increase from \$100 million spent in 1983;
- The majority of food ads on children's television shows are from cereals, candy and fast food which are high in sugar, salt and fat.

For more information and to download a pledge sheet, go to www.eyi.org/screenfree or call (516) 304-5480.

"Technology is a wonderful thing, but it is important that we find the proper balance," said Legislator D'Amaro. "I encourage everyone to take one week to turn off, tune in and rediscover all that they may be missing. It is a wonderful opportunity for families to come together."

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Suffolk County Legislator Lou D'Amaro (D-Huntington Station) represents the 17th Legislative District, which includes parts of Huntington Station, South Huntington, Huntington, West Hills, Melville, Dix Hills, Deer Park, North Babylon and West Babylon. He is Chairman of the Budget & Finance committee, Vice-Chairman of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture committee, and a member of the Human Services and Public Safety committees of the Suffolk County Legislature.