



**PRESS ADVISORY**  
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## **NOW-NYC TO PROTEST VIACOM**

### ***TEENS AND PARENTS DEMAND AN END TO SEXIST AND RACIST MUSIC***

**Sunday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 6 pm at Viacom Headquarters (1515 Broadway @ 44<sup>th</sup> St.)**

New York, NY -The National Organization for Women in New York City will hold a protest on the day the MTV Video Music Awards are set to air across the country, to raise awareness and demand change of the exploitive business practices of the media conglomerate Viacom.

“Music videos promise entertainment and excitement for their young viewers. But Viacom barrages its viewers with sexist, racist, and homophobic messages. Viacom also promotes the negative stereotypes of poor blacks and rampant materialism,” said Sonia Ossorio, President of NOW-NYC. “Over the years, Viacom has become a major force in shaping youth culture and tastes. This cultural monopoly threatens decades of progress made by the movements for women’s rights, civil rights, and social justice to eliminate bias and inequality in our society.”

NOW-NYC is targeting Viacom because it controls nearly all of the music video market. It owns numerous music TV networks, including the ubiquitous MTV, VH1, BET, and Country Music Television.

“We have a situation in which corporate America, which is overwhelmingly dominated by middle aged white males, is making money hand over fist off the bodies of young women. The fact that most of these women are women of color adds a racist dimension to the issue,” said Ebony Edwards-Ellis, Chair of NOW-NYC’s Women, Girls and Media Committee. “The economic exploitation doesn’t stop there. Pepsi, Pizza Hut, Cotton Incorporated, Verizon, and other Viacom sponsors also use these demeaning images to sell products. Meanwhile the women who display their bodies in these videos make little or no money.”

Viacom is a publicly traded company that has television networks on broadcast television and cable. NOW-NYC is calling on Viacom to 1) Stop demeaning women of all races and men of color 2) Restructure the financing of music videos so that music artists do not absorb more than their fair share of the cost 3) End the Viacom monopoly over the music video industry 4) Require that video models, dancers, or actors are paid fairly for their work.

The National Organization for Women is the nation’s largest organization working to advance women’s rights and improve women’s lives. The New York City Chapter of NOW, founded in 1966, is the largest chapter in the country with 7,000 members locally and 35,000 statewide. NOW-NYC works to protect women’s reproductive choices, end violence against women and eliminate sex discrimination in our schools, workplaces, and the justice system in New York.

PHOTO OP: Protesters with banners, “freedom trash can” for sexist music and videos, NYC Radical Cheerleaders, A **congressional hearing** focusing on “stereotypes and degradation” of women in music and videos is planned for later this month.

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