KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
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RESOLUTION NO. 00-302
RECOMMENDING ELIMINATION OF VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES FROM PUBLICLY OWNED OR OPERATED FACILITIES IN KING COUNTY

WHEREAS, today's youth have a high level of exposure to weapons and violence as evidenced by a 1997 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showing that of a national sample of high school students, 18.3% said they had carried a weapon in the preceding month; 8.5% had brought a weapon to school in the preceding month; 36.6 were in a fight and 14.8% were in a school fight in the preceding year; and 4% missed school in the past month because of fears about safety. Annually, 2.8 million 13- to 18-year olds become violent crime victims, and an estimated 9 million additional children witness violence at school or at home; and

WHEREAS, video games have become a prominent form of entertainment for American children and adolescents; and

WHEREAS,children often decide on their own which arcade-style video games they will play and their parents may not be aware that many of the games have violent antisocial content; and

WHEREAS, a 1996 survey examining the video game habits of 900 fourth through eighth grade students found that almost 50% of their favorite games had violent content; and

WHEREAS, a 1998 study found that of the 33 most popular video games at the study site, nearly 80% of the games children preferred included violence and aggression. The violence was directed toward other characters 50% of the time and violence against women was depicted in 21% of the games; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive 1997 literature review reported that "aggressive behavior may result from playing video games, especially among younger children"; and

WHEREAS, several studies have found that young children who played or merely observed a video game imitated what they were exposed to during free play, with those who played or observed violent video games showing more aggression; and

WHEREAS, video games are maintained in some city and county recreational facilities within King County; and

WHEREAS, researchers at the Center for Injury Research and Policy, School of Hygiene and Public Health at Johns Hopkins University have recommended that pediatricians, as a method of primary prevention of firearm injuries, "advise parents to limit viewing of gun violence in the media, and playing with toy guns and video games that involve shooting"; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics in urging pediatricians to advocate for reduction of violence in the media, has stated that "[t]here is no substitute for reducing both the amount and the graphic nature of current media violence on television, in movies and in video games;" and

WHEREAS, the King County Board of Health supports recreational activities and entertainment for youth which do not portray or foster violent or antisocial behavior; and

WHEREAS, the King County Board of Health believes that local governments should set an example and refrain from profiting financially from video games that expose our children to very graphic violent activities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH recommends the removal of video games with violent content from all city- and county-owned or operated facilities in King County, and urges the various local jurisdictions within and outside of King County to consider voluntary action to carry out this recommendation.

KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

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s/Greg Nickels/s Adopted March 17, 2000