

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD

SUBJECT: STATE OF THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

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ANGELA GREILING KEANE: (Sounds gavel.) Good afternoon, and welcome to the National Press Club. My name is Angela Greiling Keane, I'm a reporter for Bloomberg News and I'm the 106th President of the National Press Club. We are the world's leading professional organization for journalists committed to our profession's future through its programming, including events like this, while fostering a free press worldwide. For more information about the National Press Club, please visit our website at www.press.org. To donate to programs offered to the public through the National Press Club Journalism Institute, please visit www.press.org/institute.

On behalf of our members worldwide, I'd like to welcome our speaker and those of you who are attending today's event. Our head table includes guests of the speaker as well as working journalists who are Club members. And if you hear applause from our audience, we'd note that members of the general public are attending so it's not necessarily evidence of a lack of journalistic objectivity.

I'd also like to welcome our C-SPAN and Public Radio audiences. Our luncheons are also featured on our member-produced weekly Podcast from the National Press Club available on iTunes. You can also follow the action on Twitter today using the hashtag NPClunch. After our guest's speech concludes, we'll have Q&A. I will ask as many questions as time permits. Now it's time to introduce our head table guests. I'd ask each of you to stand briefly as your name is announced.

From your right, Maria Recio, arts and culture correspondent from McClatchy Newspapers; David McCumber, Hearst Bureau Chief; Mark Hamrick, Washington

Bureau Chief of Bankrate.com and a former National Press Club President; Diane Strahan, Chief Operating Officer of the Motion Picture Association of America, and a guest of the speaker. Skipping over the podium, Donna Leinwand Leger, a reporter for *USA Today*, Vice Chair of the Press Club's Speakers Committee, and a former National Press Club President.

Skipping over the speaker for just a moment, Andrea Stone, a freelance writer and the Speakers Committee member who organized today's event. Thank you for that, Andrea. Nell Minow, a movie critic for *Beliefnet*; Linda Kramer Jennings, *Glamour Magazine's* Washington Bureau Chief; Dipka Bhambhani with Hill & Knowlton Strategies; and Jonathan D. Salant, a reporter for *Bloomberg News* and a former National Press Club President. (Applause)

Our guest today, Christopher Dodd, spent 36 years on Capitol Hill and was Connecticut's longest serving United States Senator when in March of 2011 he went Hollywood. Or, at least, to its outpost at 16th & Eye Street where the offices of the Motion Picture Association of America, also known as Washington's most glamorous trade association, are located. As Chairman and CEO of the MPAA, Senator Dodd is the leading advocate for America's movie and television industries. Despite making his red carpet debut at last year's Oscar Awards in Los Angeles, the former Senate Banking Committee Chairman remains perhaps best known here as the Dodd in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, the most sweeping legislative reform in the financial services sector since the 1930s.

Senator Dodd, whose father Thomas also served in the Senate, is perhaps most proud of his record on children's and families issues. He founded the Senate Children's Caucus and was the author of the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act, which requires employers to give employees unpaid time off to care for a new baby or a sick family member. Dodd would later become a staunch supporter of President Obama's healthcare reform bill. But in 2007, he was among the Democrats who also ran for President. He went so far as to move his wife, Jackie, and their two young daughters, to Iowa a few months before those first in the nation caucuses. Dodd immediately dropped out after his Senate colleague, Barack Obama, trounced him and the rest of the competition in Iowa.

Two years later, following accusations that he and other lawmakers received cut rate loans from scandal plagued sub prime lender, Countrywide Financial, a Senate ethics panel later cleared him of wrongdoing and while facing a tough reelection campaign, Dodd announced in January of 2010 that he would retire. In August, while still in the Senate, he told the Connecticut *Mirror* that there would be no lobbying, no lobbying in his future. And although Dodd often called Hollywood's top lobbyist now, even though federal law prohibited from lobbying his former colleagues in Congress for two years, or until last month.

Now, as the successor to legendary power broker Jack Valenti, and more recently fellow Capitol Hill veteran Dan Glickman, Senator Dodd is the voice of the entertainment industry. As Dodd often notes, it is one of America's largest exporters bringing "more

revenue back to the U.S. than agriculture, automobiles and aerospace.” As Chairman of the MPAA, Dodd’s top priority has been to fight the spread of online piracy and stop the illegal downloading and bootlegging of Hollywood’s products, not that it’s been easy. In his first year on the job, Dodd was saddled with a public relations disaster when the six major motion picture studios that make up the association pushed for the passage of the Stop Online Piracy Act, or SOPA. The legislation that Hollywood viewed as safeguarding its copyrights and intellectual property rights came under heavy fire from Silicon Valley companies and internet users who said it would stifle free speech. The bill was eventually shelved.

More recently, Dodd has taken heat from critics who link the massacre in Newtown, Connecticut, to violent movies and video games. In a statement noting that the Sandy Hook School is in his home state of Connecticut, Dodd pledged that his industry would do its part to “help America heal,” saying, “We stand ready to be part of the national conversation.” Next weekend, however, everyone will be talking about the Academy Awards. Although before his marriage, Dodd was linked romantically to Bianca Jagger and a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, dated Star Wars star Carrie Fisher, he only recently became a Hollywood insider himself. How so? By the time he left public service, Dodd had cast nearly 10,000 roll call votes in the Senate.

Now as a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, he gets to vote for the Oscars himself. Did he go for “Lincoln,” “Argo,” “Zero Dark Thirty?” As he said before last year’s Oscars when he refused to divulge his choice, “I didn’t spend 37 years in politics and not learn anything.” Please join me in welcoming Senator Dodd. (Applause)

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: So glad I came by for that introduction, thank you. It's been a while, two years since I had the enjoyable experience of sitting here and hearing your life roll in front of you, a film version of an introduction.

Well, I'm delighted to be back and I thank the Press Club for inviting me to come by this afternoon and share some thoughts with you. So Angela, I thank you very much. And I should point out what she didn't point out, this is Angela's first responsibility as the-- first job as the host of these lunches and her job as the head of the Press Club. So round of applause for her first job as a-- congratulations. (Applause)

I've been asked a lot over the last couple of years, and more recently, whether or not I missed the Congress. And I said yes, but not this one particularly, having watched what they've been going through the last two years or so, the difficulties. And pointing out the presidential-- it was very short-- I'm glad you remembered it. Most of America has long forgotten that I was a candidate, but it's nice of you to bring it up again today. Often thought I might actually have an address that had 1600 on it. Didn't realize it would be 1600 Eye Street and not-- a block away from that other residence we thought about along the way and I thought of.

And the two year ban you've mentioned as well, which I think is a very good law, there were times when January 3rd approached this year, that I was hoping someone might offer an amendment to the fiscal cliff legislation to extend that ban a few more years, or at least give me an opportunity to pick and choose who I might have to see and talk to now that the ban has been lifted.

Well, anyway, I thank you again for coming by. And I thought I'd share some thoughts with you today. Two years ago, if you had told me that I'd be standing before you and talking about the film and television industry, I might have been wondering what you were doing with your lives to assume that I'd be in this position. Like many of you, people have enjoyed the films, enjoyed the movies over the years. As the father of two very young children, now seven, almost eight, and eleven, my movie selections were somewhat limited. I think the last one I'd seen was the Heffalump movie with my children so you don't get a chance to go out that often to see films.

But I must tell you, in the last two years I've become almost passionate about this subject matter and this industry. And so today, I thought it might be worthwhile, a sort of a maiden speech, if you will, to share with you some thoughts that have developed over the last 23 months that I've been in this job, becoming what I call the Irish version of Jack Valenti. Jack held this job for 38 years and then followed by Dan Glickman, my wonderful friend who was six or seven years at the MPAA. I should point out as well, and you've met Diane Strahan is here, our new COO, but there are a number of people here in the audience who have worked with the Motion Picture Association and in the business in this community over the years and I'm very grateful to them. They've been tremendously helpful to me over these last 23 months in educating me about the industry and how important it is and what we can do to help advance its legitimacy in this country and elsewhere. So I thank them and I notice there's some people from my previous life here as well, Angela, from my years in Congress and I'm grateful to them for showing up today.

So almost two years ago, as it was, as I began my job as the Chief Executive Officer of the Motion Picture Association of America, I was asked the following question by one of your colleagues here. And the question was why do movies matter? And I thought, well, that was a pretty good question. So today in these brief remarks, nine days before the 85th Academy Award ceremony in Los Angeles, I'd like to try to answer that question that was asked of me some 23 months ago.

First of all, I'd like to share with you while I believe the movies matter as an art form. Unlike most other forms of art, motion pictures represent a spectacular convergence of visual arts, language arts and music, attracting some of the world's most creative and talented people to produce these remarkable products. To state the obvious about most artists, they like an audience and for many of them, the bigger, the better. That explains, in part, I would suggest, why some of the most extraordinarily creative talent in the world goes to Hollywood. After all, movies offer artists the opportunity to paint on one of the largest and most stimulating canvases ever created.

Movies matter, too, because of the human emotions they excite. They entertain, they frighten, they comfort, they amuse, and they educate. The best motion pictures also elevate and enrich the cultural landscape of our nation. They dare us to think differently, and they make us walk off uncomfortably in another person's shoes.

But most of all, movies tell stories, stories that help us make sense of our world and of ourselves from time to time. This year's nine Oscar nominees for best picture do all of this and more, I would suggest. Movies that stir the heart, "Les Miserables," or "Beasts of the Southern Wild," and "Amour," for instance, edge of your seat films like "Life of Pi," "Django Unchained." Gripping dramas, "Silver Linings Playbook," and finally three films that prominently feature the policies or politics in their storyline, "Lincoln," "Argo," and "Zero Dark Thirty."

As a vehicle to which to raise awareness about important social and political issues, movies matter culturally as well. This ability to not only entertain but to stimulate, to provoke, to challenge, to educate as I said a moment ago, has been at the heart of the creative film community since its birth more than a hundred years ago. For decades, entertainment, the content creators, have had the courage to cast their gaze on some of the most pressing social problems of their day. And once they did, their work profoundly impacted millions, I would argue, for the better all across this country and around the world. Actors, directors, writers, have constantly taken a leap of faith putting themselves out on film for the world to see and scrutinize.

Tom Hanks, who in the film "Philadelphia" got Americans and the world to confront bigotry against people with AIDS. "A Gentleman's Agreement," released in the late 1940s, cast an unflattering bright light, as it should have, on anti-Semitism. Or consider the impact, if you will, on racism in "To Kill a Mockingbird," or, "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," these films had on people here at home, as I said, and around the globe.

The best movies ground us in common values and ideals. America's a big place, as we all know, with red states and blue states, as we're constantly reminded. We are a nation of conflict and division, a nation of competing interests all of which I would argue make us healthier as a people. But gathered together in a darkened theater, regardless of our differences, we become in that shared experience one place. A place, for example, where two ten year old children, one from a gritty West Texas ranch, the other from a three family flat in the Bronx, girls who might seem to have little or nothing in common, will go to their local cinema on a Saturday afternoon to see the same animated film, "Brave," for instance, and walk out having absorbed the same vital lessons of courage, of love, of good character, and duty.

We should remember that these movies that impact us so deeply, movies that unite us, are not just the products of well known actors and directors, a Tom Hanks, a Sidney Poitier or a Steven Spielberg, they are the result of incredible collaboration often involving thousands and thousands of people. Those collaborations generate more than

just social and cultural dividends, but economic ones as well not only here but around the world as well.

The movies create jobs, and many of them, all over the United States and elsewhere. So next week when you join me and millions of others, Americans and the global audience, to watch the Oscars and famous people walk the most famous red carpet in the world, keep this in mind, if you will. For every unfathomably rich and beautiful star you see that day, remember they represent less than one percent of the people responsible for creating these incredible products. The other 99 percent of the movie production workforce are men and women not unlike the people who erected this dais from which I speak today, installed the lights in this room, wired the very microphone I'm speaking from, or prepared our lunch today, for that matter.

We're all guilty of viewing the film industry through the wrong end of the lens. Yes, talented actors, directors, writers, musicians, are often the face of this film industry. But for every talented and recognizable face, there are literally tens of thousands of working people off screen who helped create the magic in the movie theater. Every work day, more than 2.1 million of our fellow citizens go to work at a job that either directly or indirectly depends on the movies and television business. These jobs involved producing, marketing, manufacturing, and distributing movies and TV shows and related movie and TV businesses. Nearly 700,000 direct jobs in all. Many of them are part of a network of 95,000 small businesses across the nation.

And let me add that the film and television industry does more than simply create jobs, it creates careers and many of these careers do not require a college degree or advanced education. With a high school diploma and several years of technical training, you're off and running in the movie and TV business earning a good living, one that pays on average around \$62,000 a year.

And let me tell you something else that may surprise you. When you look at all those jobs that Hollywood is creating, avoid the temptation, as most do, to aim your telescope west towards Los Angeles or east towards New York. Aim it everywhere in this country; in the direction of every state in this nation. Because the motion picture industry creates in all 50 states including film hubs in Georgia, North Carolina, New Mexico and New York, among others. Even in small communities like Montegut, Louisiana where "Beasts of the Southern Wild" was filmed. Over the past two years, more than 100 movies and 9 TV series were filmed in Louisiana. These productions have created more than 8,500 jobs and paid out nearly \$400 million in wages for both production and distribution related labor.

In 2011, 10 movies and 5 series were filmed in Pennsylvania including the Oscar nominated "Silver Linings Playbook," creating more than 16,000 jobs and paying nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars in wages. Oscar nominated "Lincoln," filmed in Virginia in 2011 was one of five films and one TV series filmed in that state creating 14,000 jobs and paying more than \$640 million in wages in that state. And you can go

down the list one after another across this nation and find one economic success story after another as a result of a film or television program produced in that jurisdiction.

And the true impact of this American industry is realized far beyond the 50 states. Increasingly, movies matter on a global scale as well. It is our movies, and I would add television as well, that in many ways brand America in the eyes of the world. Right now at this very moment, somewhere around the world, a young, a woman or a family is starting their exodus to America excited to begin a new life in our country. There are many reasons while they'll make that journey, to make that decision as they have over the past six or seven decades; to escape oppression, to make a better life for themselves, to chase their wildest dreams unimaginable in the nation where they were born or raised.

But I would wager that one of the reasons is because that man, that woman, or that family, had seen American films which convinced them that this country could be for them the land of unlimited possibility. This is just as true today as it was more than a century ago when the motion picture industry in the United States began to flourish, not coincidentally, at the hands of immigrants who had come from central and Eastern Europe to our nation.

Last year was a great year for the film industry. In cinemas all over the world, movies reached the highest tally in box office history. According to Rentrak, international box office receipts outside of the United States and Canada weighed in at \$23.1 billion. This is up nearly a billion dollars compared to the previous year, and I'm taking entire credit for that massive increase in their value. It all happened in the last two years you'll notice here. Make sure you call Hollywood and tell now what you hear reported out of me. From Singapore and Berlin and Buenos Aires, in almost every market in the world, it was American films, the American movie, that audiences wanted to see.

Our movies matter because they solidify the industry standing as one of the premier American industries in the world. In 2011, the film and television industry had \$14.2 billion in exports, an incredible 7:1 export to import ratio. No other major American industry has a balance of trade as positive in every nation on the globe in which it does business as the American film industry. And business is growing dramatically, especially in China, I would add, which is the big international story of 2012. Chinese box office receipts grew a staggering 31 percent to about \$2.75 billion making China the second largest international market outside of Japan. The total number of cinema screens in China today stands at about 11,000 and it's expected to double by 2015. But consider this: every single day in China, 10 new screens are built and open up in that country every single day beginning with Imax theaters, 3D theaters opening up that market to more and more people in that country.

All of these factors add up to show the impact, I think, that the American movie industry has had on a global scale as well. But in the final analysis, both here and abroad, the industry is so successful because it represents an extraordinary value to consumers the world over. Two weeks ago, I was in Los Angeles for the 65th Annual Directors Guild of America Awards. One of the pre-awards events was a discussion with the five directors

who've been nominated by the Directors Guild as best director award about the craft of filmmaking. That was the subject of the panel conversation. On that panel was the "Lincoln" director, Steven Spielberg, "Life of Pi" director Ang Lee, "Zero Dark Thirty's" Kathryn Bigelow, "Argo's" Ben Affleck and Tom Hooper, the director of "Les Miserables." When I listened to those remarkable artists, an incredible collaboration they'd orchestrated to make these enduring masterpieces, I realized that this iconic American film industry is like no other on the planet. In a very real sense, every movie the film industry creates is handcrafted and utterly unique, each and every one. The product is made with the creative equivalent of the finest gourmet ingredients available; writers, actors, directors, film scores, technical supporters, and the list goes on and on, all brought together to produce this unique, utterly unique, product.

It would be ludicrous, of course, to suggest that every film that Hollywood creates is of enduring value. I'm not suggesting that. But I would suggest that this year's lineup is particularly excellent. Film and television content are very expensive to produce. It's not uncommon for a film to take two years, or more, and tens of millions of dollars to make. A product that dozens and dozens of people toiled over to making every second matter in that film. And increasingly, they are incorporating major technological breakthroughs in their work, especially in IMAX and 3D which is revolutionizing the theater going experience.

Take "Life of Pi," for example. The novel, "Life of Pi," was published in 2001. Ang Lee read it, was riveted and wanted to make the movie. But there was one catch; creating scenes of a boy and a live man eating Bengal tiger on a lifeboat would be awkward, to say the least, in that production. He knew technology would be the answer, but 12 years ago technology had not yet caught up with his vision. Last year, it did. Thanks to the production team that pushed themselves to deliver something that had never been done before, a marvelous movie was created. This is yet another example of why we go to the movies, to be astonished and to dream as well.

Yet with all of this technology, innovation and creativity, the ticket price to consumers has remained remarkably stable over many, many years, roughly \$8. Other than staying at home listening to music or watching free TV programming, the most affordable accessible form of entertainment in the world, in my view, is still watching a motion picture inside a state of the art theater. That is why in the United States and around the world, I'm told, that movie theaters continue to draw more people than all theme parks and major sporting events combined. It has never been a better time to be a consumer of movies and television.

Because movies matter to more people in more places, who want to watch them at more times across multiple platforms, the film and television industry is continuously innovating to meet that demand. Today, movies and television shows can be viewed in theaters on big screens or at home on TV screens, laptops, iPads, Kindles, and smart phones. There are more than 375 unique licensed online distribution services around the world that provide high quality on demand film and television shows, offering the easiest, fastest, safest, highest quality product and viewing experience possible.

These services cater to every manner of consumer viewing model including rental viewing, download to own, subscription viewing, and add supported viewing as well. These distribution services are provided by every conceivable type of commercial entity including technology companies, broadcast television networks, pay channels, internet providers, movie retailers and content renters like Amazon, Netflix, iTunes, and Voodoo.

So the next time someone suggests that the film and television industry is not innovating fast enough to satisfy consumer demand, you might remind them of these innovations which I've just shared with you. To paraphrase Norma Desmond in "Sunset Boulevard," "Pictures may be getting smaller on some screens, but movies are still big and about to get even bigger."

Increasingly, the movie industry's creative talents including its actors and directors, are creating feature content for television and online audiences as well. The cable stations, even smaller ones, are getting in on the action. Content providers such as Hulu just announced it will produce an original program called "Battleground." Amazon.com will develop television pilots and feature films and Netflix has invested \$100 million to produce exclusively for its subscribers a remake of the classical BBC series, "House of Cards."

These innovations are great for consumers. I'm not exaggerating when I say that a new golden age in television and film is being ushered in. You can watch more content than ever through more channels and the quality of the movies and television shows is outstanding and getting better every day. That is why it's so crucial, in my view, that we protect this content from theft. Because consumers deserve, more than any other reason, consumers deserve to enjoy first generation versions of their favorite films, not second hand pirated films of films shot and recorded inside a movie theater on a mobile phone. We must strike a balance, in my view, between the desire for a free and open internet, which I strongly support, and the protection of intellectual property. The future cannot be about choosing one over the other, between protecting free speech or protecting intellectual property. It should, it must be, about protecting both.

We can and must, in my view, have an internet that works for everyone and we can and must have protection for the creative industries genius that intellectual property represents. There should be no confusion in my view. The more than two million Americans whose jobs depend on the motion picture and television industry free and open cannot be synonymous with working for free. To protect intellectual property and the openness and freedom of the internet, we must work together to innovate our way through these challenges. Fortunately, Silicon Valley and Hollywood are making some progress on this front, and I applaud them for doing so.

So to answer the question put to me almost two years ago next month, why do movies matter, they matter because of the enormous contribution they make, as I said, to the creative art form. Movies matter because they elevate, enrich the cultural landscape of our country. Movies position America favorably, in my view, on a global stage both

politically and economically. And either directly or indirectly, the film industry puts food on the table of more than two million of our fellow citizens. The movies deliver extraordinary value to consumers from their affordable price point to their delivery across multiple platforms.

But most of all, but most of all, movies matter because they educate and inspire. They have the power to change people's minds and even their lives. Films like "To Kill a Mockingbird," and "Deer Hunter," and "Platoon," had a profound impact on me as a human being. And I'll never forget them at all. And if I asked each one of you here today to point out or suggest whether or not there was a film that changed your lives, I would suggest that every one of you could answer the question with a film that motivated you or changed you in many ways.

And so at the moment you did answer that question, I would tell you that you just proved my point and answered the question that I was asked almost two years ago, movies do matter. And I thank you for listening this afternoon. (Applause)

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: Thank you.

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Do you want me to stand here?

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: Yes.

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: I'm having a Marco Rubio moment here. (Laughter) I couldn't resist it.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: Well, thank you, Senator. We have a wide variety of questions. I hope you're ready to cover--

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: A wide variety?

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: --cover the landscape. Starting off with, of course, topic important right now in Washington and the country, violence, gun violence. And the President, of course, in his State of the Union last week makes an impassioned appeal to reduce gun violence. What about reducing the amount of violence in movies and is there a desensitization to it from there being so much shooting on the screen?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Well, it's a great question and as you pointed out in your introduction of your remarks, one of the very first things we did-- first of all, let me begin these remarks as we're gathered here a few blocks away at the White House, the President was giving out this morning citizens awards to a number of people. I know Harris Wofford was one of them and Dr. Brazelton, who I worked very closely with. You mentioned my involvement with children's issues and Berry Brazelton and I spent 30 years together working on everything from autism and childcare and family medical leave. So I was very honored. And Harris Wofford, who's one of the authors and founders of the Peace Corps, which I served in back in the '60s. But there were six other

people also honored and these are the people in Newton, Connecticut, who courageously saved maybe some additional lives than the lives who were lost. I represented Newtown for 30 years. It's more than an abstraction to me. I happened to have driven through the community the night before, December 14th, on my way to Waterbury, Connecticut. So, I even have a hard time talking about it even at this stage and will, I presume, the rest of my life. So I care about it deeply. And as you pointed out, I spent 36 years, 30 of them in the Senate, working out issues on children's issues. So I care deeply about the subject matter.

And I felt it was important that we'd said at the very outset supporting the administration's efforts, the Vice President's taskforce, to look at these questions and said we wanted to be part of that conversation. And we have been in many ways. It was almost 50 years ago that Jack Valenti voluntary, without executive order, regulation or passage of a law in Congress, established the rating system back in the 1960s to provide tools for parents to make better choices about what their children might see, what they wanted to see.

And over the years, that system has evolved tremendously from what it was in the late 1960s to the point today there are more descriptors involved, and so forth. A lot of technology has changed. In the 1960s, there were movie theaters and three networks. And of course today, as I mentioned already, the amount of platforms that have emerged and technology providing so many more places where visual entertainment can be seen.

And so we're working to try and provide whatever assistance and support we can in that effort and we'll be a part of that in the coming weeks. We already are a part of it. So, again, I think it's an important issue and we're going to be working with the administration and others to find out the ways we can be supportive and helpful.

Let me tell you where I think the space is for us. I mean, I feel very strongly that this industry has been in the forefront of freedom of speech from its inception. As I mentioned, films that have challenged and provoked not always were received warmly because today we look back on them with more favorable eyes than when they were released at the time they were. But we have an obligation.

We found, and I sort of look at it in three ways. One is we provide choice for people, and remarkable choice for entertainment. Not every movie is for everyone. We believe very strongly in control; that is giving parents the tools they ought to have to make decisions they want. What comes into their home? When that child is going out of their home, what are they going to see, what can you learn about is available to them.

And thirdly, to educate as well as you can so that people are aware of what those tools are and how they can access them in the modern technology including websites and so forth that exist. So that choice, control and education, are really the three legs. And that second piece of control is really where we feel very strong. We need to do as much as we can to provide those kinds of tools and give people the kind of choices that they want to have. And that's where we're going to work in that space.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: What is your opinion on the amount of violence in movies? Is there too much? And if so, should Hollywood do something to have less?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: The audience is very varied in our country. We try to produce, as I say, product and give people choices across a spectrum. And then people ought to be able to have the information about what they're going to see when they walk in so they can make that choice, whether or not they want to pay that price and go to that theater experience. And I think you start getting into the business here of trying to regulate content and that's a very slippery slope in my view, and you've got to be very careful about that. There's a temptation, I think, to do that. But I think the best space to be in is giving people the information they need to make the right choices for themselves, particularly parents so that they can have the ability to control what comes into their own homes and better information about what exists when their children go out the door.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: You mentioned the Biden taskforce. Have you had a chance to talk yet with President Obama himself on the gun issue? And if so, what have you told him?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: No, I haven't had that.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: Do you plan to, and what will you tell him?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: I think normally the calls from him to me. I'd be delighted to talk to him about it, but he's got a lot on his mind.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: Is it fair for the NRA and its allies to try to paint video games and Hollywood films as an environmental factor in mass shootings?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Well, it's sort of predictable in a way and if you go back over the years when there were people who suggested that comic books were the reason for people doing things before any of this existed. So there's been a, if you go back and look at the history, every time some of these things happen, there's kind of a lurching from time to time to suggest that this is the root cause of the problems.

But let me take advantage of your question for one minute and suggest something. And that is I know there's a lot of this debate, and it goes on, and I grew up around it in no small measure. You mentioned my father in your introduction was very involved in these issues. And Connecticut is now the seventh largest producer of guns, we were number one in the country many years with Colt and Winchester and the like.

But if you were to ask me where I think we need to be focusing a lot of our attention, it is in the mental health space. I managed on the floor of the United States Senate the Mental Health Parity legislation. People like Paul Wellstone, Pete Domenici,

Ted Kennedy, many others, Gordon Smith who now runs the National Association of Broadcasters having lost a son who took his own life, were all so deeply involved in this. But I happened to have been chairing the committee and managing the bill on the floor of the Senate. My hope is that with all the-- while there's much more pyrotechnics around about guns and about media, my hope is while it may not produce the kind of results immediately you'd like that a bill can in Congress, the mental health space, really if we don't do anything else, to finally put some meaningful resources into the scourge of mental health.

I don't know how many of you have read the blog by that woman who announced that she was the mother of, in effect, a child that was very much like this young man that took the lives of the children in Newtown. And there's a lot of anxiety out there and not many opportunities for people to access the mental health they need, that families need. I used to say to audiences when I was in Congress from Connecticut, "Is there anyone in this audience," and I'll ask this one, "is there anyone in this audience who hasn't been touched by this issue either at home, with people you work with, with people you're close to, a mental health issue?" I've never met an audience yet where a single hand was ever raised. Everybody understands this issue and how devastating it could be.

And if I could pray for any one thing today with your question, is that's the space we really need attention in. (Applause)

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: There's a bunch of questions about "Zero Dark Thirty." I'll choose this one. What do you make of the controversy over "Zero Dark Thirty," particularly the lawmakers who have criticized that film for its depiction of torture?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Well, I had the opportunity to introduce Kathryn Bigelow here at the museum when it screened the film, "Zero Dark Thirty," and I'll begin with what I said to that audience. First of all, it's a movie. It's a movie. And so you need to understand what that means. There's a lot of poetic license in the creation of artistic art form. This was not a documentary. Obviously it's about real life events that happened. And my view is that they wanted to tell this story of what transpired over a decade that ultimately led to the successful apprehension and the killing of Osama bin Laden. Part of that story involved enhanced interrogation techniques. And you saw them on the film.

I almost suggested had you tried to tell that ten year story and left it out, there might have been an even greater criticism of the film for disregarding something that was used. I think it was also clear, as I saw it, and I've watched it a couple of times, the film, in my view I thought the film said it ultimately the reason that we were able to find out who the courier was was for a lot of reasons. Some of it was purely accidental, as the film points out, some of it was because there were incredible Americans whose names none of us are ever going to know who get up every morning and go to work to keep us safe, that are staring at computer screens and drilling for data that give us information that keep us safer. We don't always celebrate Washington. That film celebrates, in my view, the

incredible, incredible hard work that gets done by people whose names and faces we'll never, ever know.

So put aside whether or not you think it was a good movie or a bad movie, I'll leave that to the critics, and the voters at the Oscars. But to ask me whether or not Kathryn Bigelow tried to make a good movie and tell a story and also celebrate the lives of some remarkable people, I think she achieved that goal, yeah, in that. (Applause)

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: You mentioned the movie rating system. And this questioner asks, since you're here at the National Press Club, a place dedicated to transparency, could you address the secrecy surrounding the film rating process, and would you favor bringing that process into the open including more transparency about who the people are making ratings decisions and how those determinations are made?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Well, look, again it's nothing static about it. I mean, as I mentioned, it started back in the 1960s and actually goes even further back. I'm not going to engage in a history lesson, but the first head on the MPAA was a fellow by the name of Hays. And then it moved to Eric Johnson, who had the second job, and then it was Jack for many years, and Dan Glickman, I mentioned, and myself. And this was an effort to get away from-- which occurred-- we had-- literally, jurisdictions had their own ratings boards. And so you can imagine trying to produce a product that had a national audience tailoring it to various markets around the country, you'd almost-- you'd kill an industry.

And so the idea was to come up with a national rating system, a voluntary system, to try and provide that guidance for people along the way. And obviously, it goes back to the Hays rules, and they'd seem almost comical today, I suppose, for what they were in the 1920s coming along as opposed to what we accept today as a 21st century audience. So there's nothing concrete about this. You try to make judgments based on where public mood and attitude and sensibilities are as you move forward.

And that's what the ratings board has tried to do over the years and still does. I'm on the appeals board of it, so they meet occasionally when producers or directors will appeal a rating along the way. So we're constantly examining, are we doing this as well as you can? Are there things that you can do better? You're never going to have it perfectly well. You're dealing with a very diverse audience. Forget whether or not international audience, you're dealing with a domestic audience that has very different ideas of what is acceptable or unacceptable.

So in that space to try to come up with the best you can so the people have as much information as they can to make the decisions I mentioned earlier. We've stayed away with advertising who people are because you can imagine what that would provoke and invite in this day and age. These are people who come from what we call families across the country, so they try to represent geographically the kinds of views that might be represented in various areas of our nation where there may be some differences.

Economic background, so they're not coming from one particular sector or another. You never have that perfectly right, either.

But when we've asked over the years the American public through surveys we've done, how are they doing, most recently a couple of years ago before all of the most recent incidences occurred, and again it may change somewhat in light of what's happened now in Newtown or what happened in Aurora. I can't tell you that, I haven't seen anything lately. But as of a year or so ago, putting aside the specifics, when asked the question, "What do you feel about the rating system," the answers, the numbers were very, very high, above 70 percent as I recall, of people having a favorable response about their use of the rating system to make decisions.

So I think it does a pretty good job in a very difficult space to try and represent the values and ideals of a people as diverse as we are.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: You talked a good deal about the Chinese market and how it's expanding. Is the MPAA working with the Chinese government to open that market to allow for the release of additional American films and especially non-censored American films?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Well, sure. I mentioned for many years the limits were-- and not just us, it was global-- only 20 foreign films, including our own, could be screened in the Chinese market. And then as a result of a WTO, World Trade Organization case, and a negotiation of which the MPAA and the U.S. Trade Office did a terrific job, we were able to increase that number from 20 to 34 of the films. There are no limitations on co-production but obviously China decides what it's going to allow its viewing public to see. And so they do control that and that's no great surprise. And not just us, but others and they have their own standards of what they use or accept that'll be allowed to be shown in their theaters.

I mentioned in my remarks that what has happened that's been interesting is despite the size of the country, there were very few theaters in China. But recently, the Chinese have decided this is something they want to provide for their consumers and are building and opening up ten new screens a day in the country to the point where they have 11,000 today. But even a few years ago, just a handful.

So we're on a fairly good space and working at it all the time, going back and forth. And again, there's always some issues that come up. But we think it's an opportunity, again, for as much as it has been. And I say this in somewhat of a parochial sense, but again I think our country has benefited tremendously over the years because of the American film industry. It doesn't mean every film we're necessarily proud of.

I'll just tell you one quick anecdote that sort of makes the point, maybe. I was attending one of these film festivals, actually in Australia, my first trip to that country. An individual came up and talked to me who was in the business, I guess, but he started out by saying, I'm going to paraphrase it, "You know, I have strong disagreements with your

country and your foreign policy,” went out some length, we're not unfamiliar with. You kind of hear that wherever you go to some degree in certain places. But he stopped me and he said, “But I want to say one thing about your film industry.” He said, “I know very few other nations in the world that not only tolerate having an industry examine, ridicule, attack, challenge public and private institutions as you do in the United States. And then to top it all off, you turn around and give them awards for doing it.” He said, “As much as I get upset with some of your policies, no other nation in the world celebrates the freedom of speech and the welcoming of ideas.”

We had a night the other night for George Stevens, whom many of you know, George Stevens, Jr., a wonderful family with a rich tradition in this industry. Spent most of his adult life here in the United States in Washington. But I remember as a Peace Corps volunteer in the 1960s when George Stevens was the head of the film and television division of USIA under Edward R. Murrow in those days, and the Kennedy years. And they produced 300 documentaries a year. And I remember as a Peace Corps volunteer way up in the mountain villages on the border with Haiti, getting some of the documentaries with a generator, because there was no electricity, putting up a sheet, in some cases, to screen one of George Stevens' documentaries.

And many of them were not flattering about us. Many of them were-- I remember showing the film about the nine in Little Rock, Arkansas and the civil rights thing. But I remember watching the audience in that remote village, if you will. All of a sudden getting an appreciation, we weren't afraid to talk about ourselves and to talk about how we're all trying to get this better and each generation moving us along. And we do that, not necessarily with USIA today. But Kathryn Bigelow, what was done with “Argo,” what's done with “Lincoln,” going back and telling it in a way that probably more people know about the 13th Amendment today and the abolition of slavery as a result of that film, with all due respect to history teachers, the world over, in a sense.

It is a remarkable contribution for our country. And the idea that we can show and demonstrate who we are in a place like China, I think, ought to be welcomed. And so we're going to continue pushing to try to get more of our product in because we believe that they deserve to see what we're making as well. And we think it's good for us, too, to be able to have that opportunity.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: The MPAA has backed extending copyrights for works that were created decades ago. The questioner asks what possible public good could come of extending such copyright? Isn't this a huge giveaway to the studios and publishers?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Read that again, what is it?

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: The question is about extending copyrights for old movies.

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Oh. Well, the only specific law that was written into the constitution of the United States in 1789 was copyright. With all the other broad values that are incorporated in that organic document, the only specific recommendation was copyright. And that was long before, obviously, film or television in 1789. But we were a young country and we realized that we needed to protect our innovations and our creativity.

And it's unfortunate the way this debate seems to come down, and your introduction sort of reflected it as well, that it's all about Hollywood and technology and suggesting that copyright and counterfeit goods and security issues are not included in this debate and discussion.

I'll repeat what I said earlier. To me, I think what's occurred technologically is so incredible and how much we benefited and the world has with having a free and open internet that works for everyone. It is exciting beyond words that it exists. I also happen to believe that the innovations, the creativity that are able to be produced here and elsewhere are also very much worth protecting and preserving.

The issue becomes can these two worlds exist together? And I believe they not only can but must if we're going to succeed. I spent the day last week at Pixar in the Bay area in Los Angeles, now a division of the Walt Disney Company. If you ever get the chance, they have tours you can go through if you're out there. Go and just look at it. You're looking at what the world ought to look like. It is content and technology producing masterful works in the animated space. Really phenomenal what they achieve and accomplish.

Some day, someone's going to write the book, as I like to tease people in California, that there was the global capital content in one city. And a car ride away was the global capital of technology. And for some reason in the same country in the same state, these people couldn't figure out how they needed each other and were asking all of us to somehow make a choice. Pick one side or the other as if in the end, we're all going to benefit if one loses and one wins. Content needs technology. Technology needs content. And I'm working as hard as I can to find ways in which we can bridge this gap. And a lot is happening and positive news.

We're working with Google, for instance, and stepping up on sort of, depressing if you will, on the first pages, illegal sites. We're working with the ad brokers, we're working with the payment processors to try and make sure we strip the financial advantages out of illegal sites as well. We're going to have a site opened up in the next few weeks that will give people the chance to learn if, in fact, unintentionally they've been downloading illegally a product without any punitive implications. Working on the assumption that most people, if informed that something they're doing is outside of the legal space, it'll stop or they'll stop doing it.

So there's any number of things that are occurring in that area. You haven't asked the question, but I'm not enthusiastic about legislating in this area. I think we need to try

to find ways in which we can achieve what ought to make sense to everyone and stop asking people to somehow pick one side of this equation or the other as if somehow we're going to win if that occurs, somehow as if it were an athletic contest rather than recognizing we need both content and technology for the benefit of everyone, in my view.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: Well, speaking of legislation, privacy legislation of course was derailed last year because of opposition from high tech companies in part. Are you talking with those companies, that industry, to work out a compromise in this new Congress? And what concessions are you willing to make to get that sort of bill through?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Well, there's a lot of conversation occurring and occurring not just at this level, most of it's been occurring business to business, I would suggest, without going into the details. One, I don't know all the details of it, not should I necessarily know them. I just know that the content companies work-- in fact, most of them, I think, have distribution agreements, for instance, with Google already so they have business to business relationships every single day at many levels, and a lot of communication. A lot of the technology companies are now moving into content themselves, which I think probably will raise the profile of content. As you're beginning to try to market it, I presume you're going to want to get compensated for your creations as well. So a lot is occurring that I think is moving us in the right direction and ways.

And I'm certainly reaching out, and will be, to people to try and figure out some ideas people can bring to the table on how we can see that space be filled by those who want to see content and technology. And, of course, technology is changing at warp speed. I mentioned in my remarks all of the incredible things that are occurring in the content space technologically. This idea it's old media, it's anything but old media if you see how it's being produced and what's occurring today. It's phenomenal, what's occurring in the content space. And so it's sort of ludicrous to be talking about as old media, in a sense.

And so to the extent we can do that, I think we're all going to be benefiting and it will require, I think, constant work. There's not some point at which it's all over with. I think it requires the kind of cooperative relationship that is going to produce the best results, in my view. And we need some people who are willing to understand that and step up and make it happen. I think Steve Jobs clearly did, in a way. I think Bob Iger at Disney who's on the board of Apple certainly does. You go down the list of various other people, the founder of eBay who is also in the content side of the question. There are a lot of those people who move back and forth and have been successful in both technology and content. And I think leadership in those elements-- obviously, Steve is gone today, but nonetheless the example I cited with Pixar is a good example.

Lucas Films is a wonderful example, again, that just got acquired, by the way, by Disney as well. But the idea of having that incredible technology at the Presidio in San

Francisco is an example, again, of content and technology, state of the art stuff that's producing incredible product for all of us.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: We'll move to a couple of questions about your previous life before your current job. The questioner asks--

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Which previous life are you going to talk about, by the way?

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: The one in the Senate.

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Just curious. (Laughter)

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: In light of the Senate's refusal to bring Chuck Hagel's nomination as Defense Secretary to a vote this week, do you think that Harry Reid made a mistake by not forcing through a real reform of a filibuster?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Look, I want you to get back to some of the questions about the space I'm in. After 36 years, I loved my job in Washington, I'm a great observer. I read all the press accounts and get the magazines and so forth to keep up with it, but I'm not there. And they've got a tough job, my former colleagues. And by the way, I am optimistic. I know this is a minority view, I'm optimistic about the Congress. A remarkable generation coming along, Republicans and Democrats, in my view, who are going to once again make that institution as important and as vibrant and vital as it has been historically. And so I'm sort of alone in expressing that view, but I believe it very strongly.

And I go down and listen to people who I have great confidence in and hope in that I think are going to make a difference in all of this. I happen to be an advocate of-- if the simple question is do you believe there ought to be a filibuster rule in the Senate, of course there should be, in my view. It's what the founders intended. If you're creating nothing more than a sort of unicameral systems, a de facto, a mirror image of each other, then what's the point, in a sense, of having two chambers? There is a reason why the Senate is a counterbalance, why the House is the counterbalance where the popularly elected official, where the majority rules. And the Senate was to be a place where the minority rules, in a sense, that the rules tilt to favor the minority, a minority of one including that, the founders had in mind.

In a sense, it seems almost antiquated in the world where all of us want things yesterday. You mentioned the question, or someone did to me earlier, about the new what they call-- some of the headline was bingeing. Instead of waiting 13 weeks to watch a serial of a TV show, you can now watch all 13 episodes on one weekend. I can't believe anyway that people want to do this. But the idea we all want everything immediately. The idea of some patience in a process.

And the Senate, inherent in the Senate, is slow and patient and for good reason. There's nothing wrong with the rule of the majority, but we've all learned painfully historically there can be a tyranny to the majority and some additional thought may be required to make sure what we're going to do is the right thing to be done. And so the Senate, that ability to be able to slow that down is important. Now, if you abuse the privilege of doing so, then the pendulum swings the other way and it has, in my view, and it's been abused to the point where you end up with people talking about getting rid of it all together. And so if you're going to use it, use it deliberately when you think it ought to be used. But don't use it as often as I've seen it used in the last few years or you do run the risk of losing it all together. But I would vehemently oppose any effort to undermine that even further than has been the case.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: We are almost out of time, but before asking the last question, we have a couple of housekeeping matters to take care of. First of all, I'd like to remind you about our upcoming luncheon speakers. On March 13th, we have Mariska Hargitay, star of "Law and Order SVU" and founder of the Joyful Heart Foundation. She will discuss her career and how her role inspired her to become an advocate for survivors of violence and abuse. On April 9th, we have Dr. John H. Noseworthy, the President and CEO of the Mayo Clinic who will discuss issues facing the healthcare industry. And on April 12th, we have documentary filmmaker Ken Burns who will discuss his new documentary, "The Central Park Five."

Second, I would like to present our guest with the traditional National Press Club coffee mug to add to the collection. (Applause)

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Very good. This year I can accept it and take it, too. I couldn't before.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: I'm pretty sure it's below the gift limit. One last question.

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: It's always dangerous, one more. This is the one you want to duck.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: We have a mystery we're hoping you can explain from your time now in this job and the previous one. Can you help us understand why whenever a celebrity shows up on Capitol Hill to push a favorite cause, there is so much excitement in the halls of Congress?

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER DODD: Nope. (Laughter) Thank you all very much. (Applause)

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: Thank you for coming today. Thank you for not dodging the hard questions, at least. I'd also like to thank National Press Club staff including its Journalism Institute and Broadcast Center for organizing today's event. Finally, here's a reminder that you can find more information about the National Press

Club on our website. Also, if you'd like to get a copy of today's program, please check out our website at www.press.org. Thank you, we are adjourned. (Sounds gavel.)

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