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March 15, 2005

The Honorable Leland Yee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 94249-0012

Dear Assemblymember Yee:

On behalf of the International Game Developers Association and its 95,000+ individual members and users worldwide (over 12,000 of which are based in California), I am writing in opposition to Assembly Bill 450. We oppose any effort that would treat video games differently from other forms of expression.

The International Game Developers Association is a San Francisco-based nonprofit membership organization that advocates globally on issues related to digital game creation. Our members' creative freedoms would be directly affected by the unnecessary restrictions provided for in A.B. 450. The IGDA is committed to our continued support of the voluntary use of the ESRB rating system and the display of ESRB rating information and signage at retail.

As the Supreme Court and lower courts have consistently affirmed, video games are an expressive medium worthy of the same free speech protections as movies, books and other forms of art and entertainment. Attempts to regulate video game content or consumers' access to the creativity and expression contained in video games, as provided under A.B. 450, would run afoul of these constitutional protections. In turn, this legislation would subject video game developers to the chilling effect of government regulation, crippling their ability to express their ideas.

Game creation is a massively complex mix of science and art. From software engineers to script writers to animators to music composers, there is a great need for talented, creative and educated individuals that must work in unison to see a game become a reality. In step with the growing need for talent, universities and colleges – over a 50 just in the state of California – are implementing game development courses and degree programs.

Video games are emerging as the leading art form of the 21st century. Your proposed bill would stagnate this important cultural medium and its future evolution.

The IGDA appreciates your consideration of our views and concerns. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Jason Della Rocca
Executive Director, IGDA

Cc: Assembly Member Ed Chavez, Chair, Assembly Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Tourism and
Internet Media Committee
Assembly Member Dave Jones, Chair, Assembly Judiciary Committee