



Entertainment Industries Council

–Encouraging the Art of Making a Difference

## **ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL TO RE-LAUNCH AND REVITALIZE INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS GUN VIOLENCE DEPICTIONS IN ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTIONS**

*EIC is taking immediate action to reach out to the creative community in an effort to establish a voice of reason that preserves creative freedom while helping to discourage violence through keen storytelling*

Washington, DC (December 20, 2012) – The Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. (EIC) announced today that it would re-launch and revitalize its initiative to address gun violence through portrayals in entertainment television and movies. EIC is taking immediate action to reach out to the creative community in an effort to establish a voice of reason that preserves creative integrity and creative freedom while helping to discourage gun violence through stories that have a keen eye on the mental health implications.

EIC will specifically focus on the role the creative community can have as important influencers of what matters to people, what moves their hearts and minds. “Lethal violence is out of line and now harming the psyche of our nation. The entertainment industry is an asset in positioning the needed range of human passion, emotion, hope and concern,” said Brian Dyak, President and CEO of the organization.

Stephen W. Hargarten, MD, MPH, Professor and Chair of Emergency Medicine from the Medical College of Wisconsin is teaming with EIC. Hargarten stated, “EIC’s work in mental health depiction and seminal work in gun violence prevention can expedite the discussions needed to take action. Public debate can become mired in poorly defined rhetoric of gun violence and gun control. After these events, discussions are often narrowly focused and fragmented.. Nobody wants these tragedies to occur in their communities. Gun owners and non-gun owners alike have an interest in providing safe homes, neighborhoods and streets. Our focus needs to shift to community awareness, safety and mental health services, and public health strategies.”

EIC will be readying its *First Draft* resource services for writers desiring expert input on storylines and character development that address gun violence and mental health concerns. Emphasis will be placed on the affect content may have on children. EIC will address topics such as Kids and Guns; Deglamorizing Gun Play; Crime and Punishment: Legal Consequences; Guns, Drugs and Alcohol; Emotional Consequences; Firearm Safety and Storage; Suicide and Guns Turned Inward; and Mental Health Resources. Initial depiction resource material will be provided to writers, producers, and directors, as well as entertainment executives beginning within the first ten days of January on an ongoing basis.

Dyak said, “Our industry is acclaimed for positively assisting in overcoming tragedy



and disasters. Addressing a public health issue such as gun-related violence and mental health is a call to action that our creative community will embrace and take to heart.”

The EIC Action Strategy recognizes urgency. “As Congress becomes embroiled in public policy debates and research is undertaken, it is essential there be clear action steps taken within the entertainment community to affect attitude and behavior, and promote understanding,” he added.

EIC intends to cooperate with the White House Task Force, Chaired by Vice President Joe Biden, Congressional Committees and other national leaders exploring a variety of policy proposals, especially those efforts to study the role of entertainment in affecting our culture.

“The entertainment industry is part of the solution and there are many in the industry who desire to be so, while protecting creative integrity, and discovering new ways to address conflict resolution and maintain content entertainment value. But the most important contribution we can make is protecting our children and that trumps all other concerns,” Dyak concluded.

### **About Entertainment Industries Council**

EIC is a non-profit organization founded in 1983 by leaders within the entertainment industry to bring their power and influence to bear on communication about health and social issues. The organization is considered to be the chief pioneer of entertainment and journalism outreach and a premiere success story in the field of entertainment education. This mission relies on providing resource information to the creative community and culminates in recognition of the industry through the national television special *PRISM Awards Showcase* which addresses accurate portrayals of substance use issues and mental health concerns. The organization also produces the *S.E.T Awards*, honoring positive and non-stereotypical portrayals of science, engineering and technology.

For a complete list of health and social issues addressed by EIC and local projects please visit First Draft and EIC’s website. EIC’s web site is [www.eiconline.org](http://www.eiconline.org). The *PRISM Awards* web site is [www.prismawards.com](http://www.prismawards.com).

###

### Media Contacts:

Larry Deutchman	<a href="mailto:ldeutch@eiconline.org">ldeutch@eiconline.org</a>	818-861-7782
Skyilar Zwick	<a href="mailto:szwick@eiconline.org">szwick@eiconline.org</a>	703-481-1414