

Bidder for Braves draws opposition for hotel pornography

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CBS SportsLine.com wire reports

ATLANTA – Liberty Media's bid to buy the Atlanta Braves is facing new opposition from pro-family advocates because Liberty owns On Command, which sells adult movies in hotel rooms across the nation. Those opposed to the sale call Liberty chief John Malone a "white-collar pornographer." The opposition to Malone is coming from such organizations as James Dobson's Focus on the Family, Concerned Women for America and Georgia Family Council.

According to its website, On Command sells movies in about 890,000 rooms in 3,300 hotel properties. "If this happens, what's to stop them from selling a team to Larry Flynt?" asked Stephen Adams, associate editor of Focus on the Family's *Citizen Magazine*, referring to the *Hustler* magazine publisher. "People who have any regard for Major League Baseball in Georgia and Atlanta really should look at Malone," said Adams, who called Malone the nation's top "white-collar pornographer."

For Adams and others, the opposition to Malone continues even though the team's current owner, Time Warner, also sells adult movies through its cable TV business. "I say hey, great, get them out," said Tanya Ditty, Georgia director of Concerned Women for America. "Get the porn industry out, period. To me it's like starting with a fresh slate. Just because they are the current owners doesn't mean their pornography is any better."

Baseball owners could consider the bid from Liberty Media as early as their scheduled Aug. 8-10 meeting in New York. "The owners need to go into this with their eyes wide open," Adams said. "We would prefer that the Atlanta Braves or no team be owned by any pornographer, whether it's Time Warner's questionable business activity or John Malone's questionable business activity." Added Adams: "This is baseball and apple

pie and America."

Calls to Liberty Media, On Command and Major League Baseball were not immediately returned, nor was a call to Turner Sports, a Time Warner company. Ditty, who lives in Atlanta, said she loves to watch baseball games at Turner Field. "I don't want to be lining the pockets of the pornography industry with the purchase of Braves tickets," she said. "Anytime I want to buy a ticket I feel like I would be contributing to the funding. Pornography destroys lives, destroys homes, and I just don't think that's good for Atlanta."

Time Warner would reclaim a significant block of its stock in a tax-free exchange that would give Liberty Media cash and the Braves. Liberty Media owns about 4 percent of Time Warner.

Atlanta Falcons owner Arthur Blank and a group led by Atlanta real estate executive Ron Terwilliger are other bidders for the Braves who are believed to be on standby in case Time Warner's talks with Liberty Media break down.

Hunter acknowledged he could not say how Liberty Media's ownership of On Command could hurt the Braves.

"Since baseball is a family sport and we are a family organization we are very concerned about the effects it could have," Hunter said. "We don't know yet exactly how the connection could be made between the two, but we think somebody should ask the question now instead of later because of the potential damage to husbands, wives and kids."