

CONCERNED
WOMEN *for* AMERICA
LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

February 14, 2023
Senate Judiciary Committee
Testimony in Support of SB 2360

Chairwoman Diane Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am Linda Thorson, State Director for Concerned Women for America (CWA) of North Dakota. Today, I am testifying for Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee in support of SB 2360.

As the largest public policy women's organization in the nation and our state, Concerned Women for America (CWA) of North Dakota urges you to protect minors by prohibiting the promotion of obscenity, objectionable materials, and obscene performance which appeals to a prurient interest.

I appreciate the opportunity to address the merits and necessity of passing SB 2360, relating to obscenity control. There are numerous harms for children which make pornography a public health risk.

In 2011, at the National Strategy Conference on Combating Child Exploitation, [Attorney General Eric Holder](#) expressed alarm at the rapid growth of pornography associated with children and sex abuse saying,

"As everyone here knows, the work isn't easy. In fact – in this time of growing demands and limited resources – your efforts – to protect children in need and at risk, to support juvenile victims, and to safeguard our young people from exploitation, abuse, trafficking, sexual violence, and online threats – have never been more urgent."

Since the launch of Project Safe Childhood five years ago, investigations and prosecutions of child exploitation crimes have increased dramatically. Unfortunately, we've also seen a historic rise in the distribution of child pornography, in the number of images being shared online, and in the level of violence associated with child exploitation and sexual abuse crimes. **Tragically, the only place we've seen a decrease is in the age of victims."**

[The facts](#) are:

- Today's pornography includes hardcore, explicit material that is warping reality and increasing the prevalence of divorce, rape, sexual violence, and sex trafficking.
- The ever-increasing prevalence of pornography, prostitution, and sex slavery, and the ways that those forms of commercial sexual exploitation feed off of each other [form a](#)

[multi-billion dollar industry](#) that exploits thousands of girls and women in this country and millions around the world.

- Pornography has been known for being used for training sex slaves on how they are to perform during sex acts. Many of these sex slaves are children who will often become desensitized to the material.
- [The violent, sexual subjugation of women](#) is not an unfortunate byproduct of pornography but one of its main selling points. It is an industry that rewards risky sexual behavior and preys on the minds of both young men and women by appealing to the prurient instincts and feeding the most debased desires.
- Numerous pieces of [literature](#) are available in the National Library of Medicine on the topic of compulsive sexual behavior, [sexual addiction, sexual compulsivity, and sexual impulsivity](#) showing pornography is addictive.
- A [study](#) was done by the Max Planck Institute for Human Development on 64 male adults regarding the impact that pornography had on each of their brains. What they found was that the more hours of pornography that a subject consumed, the less gray matter they would find in the right caudate and the less functional connectivity there would be between the right striatum and the left dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. In plain terms, the disconnectedness and intense stimulation that pornography causes in the brain's reward system can be similar to that of drug and alcohol addictions.
- Pornography that is easy to access has led to widespread use leading to illegal activity, like child abuse, prostitution, and sex trafficking. In a [study](#) done on 854 women in prostitution, researchers found that 49 percent stated that pornography was made of them.

Safety policies and technology protection measures as outlined on SB 2360 are urgently needed and can be done. As [Ross Douthat of The New York Times](#) argued in an op-ed:

“The belief that [porn] should not be restricted is a mistake; the belief that it cannot be censored is a superstition. Law and jurisprudence [changed once](#) and can change again, and while you can find anything *somewhere* on the internet, making hard-core porn something to be quested after in dark corners would dramatically reduce its pedagogical role, its cultural normalcy, its power over libidos everywhere.”

I ask you to speak up for our fellow men, women, and children and work to end pornography's destruction. Unless we respond as a society, courageously and with a sense of urgency, we can expect the problem to grow.

Please give SB 2360 a Do Pass recommendation.