



Testimony of Jill Manning, Ph.D., LMFT, CCPS, EMDR, CCTP, BH-TMH
March 18, 2025, 9:00 AM Central (Remote Testimony)
House Judiciary Committee | Senate Bill 2307: Requiring Libraries and Schools to
Protect Children from Accessing Obscene Materials

Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 2307.

I am Dr. Jill Manning, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with twenty-five years of clinical and research experience specializing in the effects of pornography and sexual betrayal.

Underage Exposure Compounded by Schools and Libraries

Today, underage pornography exposure is tragically the norm (Carroll et al., 2025). While the internet pushes obscene material into children's lives through algorithms, tracking cookies, and deceptive marketing (Carroll et al., 2025; Manning, 2005), schools and libraries further this exposure by offering increasingly explicit content in their collections (Solas, 2023).

Nicole Solas, Senior Fellow with the Education Freedom Center, explains:

"These books do not simply provide clinical sex education describing anatomy and reproduction. They contain numerous pornographic passages and pictures meant to instruct children on sexual pleasure, to sexually excite children, or push...ideological views of sex" (Solas, 2023).

Decades of research confirm early exposure to explicit content has profound and lasting consequences—neurologically, cognitively, behaviorally, psychologically, and academically (Carroll et al., 2025; Owen et al., 2012; Manning, 2006) [See highlights of key findings on pages 4-5].

What Adults Assume vs. What Actually Happens

Research shows adults grossly underestimate the harms of early exposure to explicit content (Wright et al., 2023). Many assume it's harmless, citing their own exposure as minors and believing they "turned out fine." However, today's explicit content is far more extreme, violent, and addictive than in years past.

When a 14-year-old picks up a sexually explicit graphic novel in a school library, their brain reacts in milliseconds—releasing dopamine, oxytocin, and adrenaline while triggering intense emotions. This physiological state will enhance retention of the content, and because the material is found in a trusted space, it carries implicit endorsement. Most teens will not discuss it with an adult but will revisit it in secret, leaving caregivers unaware. Graphic novels are particularly influential, as the brain processes images as more immediate and truthful than text.

Why Action Is Needed

The neurological impact of obscenity overrides rational control, hijacking informed consent, an essential component of intellectual freedom (Brief of Amici Curiae Scholars, 2024; Kühn et al., 2014; Draps et al., 2020). Some scholars even refer to obscenity as an erototoxin for this reason (Reisman, n.d.). With still-developing brains, minors are the most vulnerable consumers (Brief of Amici Curiae Scholars, 2024).

For those who claim sexually explicit material has educational value, consider its troubling outcomes: soaring STD rates among 15-24-year-olds, a disturbing rise in child-on-child sexual abuse, escalating dating violence, distorted views of sex, gender, and relationships, a sharp increase in choking during sexual encounters, and growing cynicism toward marriage—all set against the backdrop of a mental health crisis.

Parents across political spectrums now track explicit school library content on independent websites because no universal system alerts them to such materials (Solas, 2023). This is not an endeavor born of ample free time—it is a desperate response to a systemic failure. This is also not about censorship; it's about child welfare and parental rights. We apply age restrictions to movies, video games, and TV. Why are books exempt?

Balancing intellectual freedom with child protection is both possible and imperative. Our youth deserve access to high-quality materials that inspire excellence and growth while being shielded from content deemed legally obscene.

For these reasons I urge a DO PASS on Senate Bill 2307.

Thank you. I stand for questions.

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Highlights of Documented Harms of Pornography Exposure on Youth

1. Neurological Development:

- Exposure to pornography structurally alters brain regions responsible for impulse control, decision-making, and emotional regulation while also decreasing grey matter volume in the prefrontal cortex (Brief of Amici Curiae Scholars, 2024; Kühn et al., 2014; Draps et al., 2020).
- These structural changes then increase susceptibility to compulsive behaviors, including addiction (Brief of Amici Curiae Scholars, 2024).

2. Cognitive and Behavioral Risks:

- Pornography normalizes aggression and misogyny, especially when violent content is consumed (Manning, 2006), and *most* mainstream pornography *is* violent according to content analyses (Bridges et al., 2012).
- It also normalizes promiscuity and sexual violence (Manning, 2006), leading children to mimic what they see. A recent report out of the U.K. reveals children are now the largest group of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children, with pornography identified as the leading factor in the quadrupling of such offenses in recent years (The Guardian, 2024).
- Additionally, exposure fosters mechanical views of sex and triggers earlier sexual initiation, increasing rates of sexually transmitted infections over the lifespan (Manning, 2006), and relational dissatisfaction in adulthood (Willoughby et al., 2022).

3. Emotional and Relational Harms:

- Early exposure reduces empathy while increasing relational aggression and narcissistic tendencies (Kasper et al., 2014; Manning, 2006).
- It lowers self-esteem, distorts body image, and diminishes the ability to form secure attachments (Owen et al., 2012; Manning, 2006).

4. Mental Health Consequences:

- Pornography consumption correlates with higher rates of depression, anxiety, loneliness, delinquent behaviors, suicidality, and lower life satisfaction (Altin et al., 2024; McGraw et al., 2024; Owen et al., 2012).

5. Academic Performance:

- Research links pornography use to impaired academic performance by disrupting attention, reducing focus, and slowing cognitive function (Šević et al., 2019; Beyens et al., 2015).

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