

Testimony of Tami Brown Rodriguez, Director of Policy for Jaco Booyens Ministries, and Family Member of a Survivor

Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is **Tami Brown Rodriguez**, and as the **Director of Policy for Jaco Booyens Ministries**—an organization on the frontlines of the fight against human trafficking and as a **family member of a survivor**—a loved one who has witnessed firsthand the devastating consequences of pornography's unchecked influence on our society.

My niece, Dakota, was just a child when she was first groomed. It did not start as a trafficker in a dark alley, nor by a stranger on the internet. It started in her school. It started in the library. It started with easy access to pornographic material that normalized the unthinkable. The explicit content that we brush off as “entertainment” was the very foundation that conditioned her mind to accept exploitation. **Porn didn't just harm her—it primed her for trafficking.**

Let me say this plainly: **porn is not just a personal vice—it is a public health crisis.**

Pornography is a **gateway to exploitation**. It is fueling the demand that traffickers are all too eager to supply. Research confirms that exposure to pornography **rewires the brain**, increases violent sexual behavior, and normalizes abuse. Our children—many as young as **8 or 9 years old**—are stumbling across explicit content that they are neither emotionally nor developmentally equipped to process. **We are failing them if we continue to pretend this is harmless.**

This is why states across the country have already taken action. **Utah was the first to declare pornography a public health hazard in 2016, followed by states like Florida, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Louisiana, Texas, and at least 10 others.** They recognize the overwhelming evidence that pornography is not just a moral concern—it is a **societal crisis** affecting brain development, relationships, and, ultimately, public safety. And yet, we are still debating whether to act.

We regulate tobacco, alcohol, and gambling because they are addictive and harmful. **So why are we ignoring the science that tells us pornography has the same addictive qualities, the same devastating mental health effects, and the same public health consequences?**

Ilonka Deaton, a survivor and advocate, speaks to this truth when she says:

"Survivors don't just wake up one day and move on. The damage that pornography does—the way it distorts intimacy, self-worth, and love—leaves scars that take a lifetime to heal. It teaches predators that abuse is normal. It teaches children that their bodies are commodities. And it teaches victims that they have no value beyond their use to others."

We cannot afford another legislative session where this issue is ignored. **The lives of our children, the safety of our communities, and the future of our nation depend on us recognizing this epidemic for what it is.**

Pornography is a public health crisis. And every day that we refuse to call it what it is, another child is groomed, another victim is exploited, and another trafficker profits.

The time to act is now.

Thank you,
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