

Dear Senators and Representatives:

My name is Tod Fossetta and I am presenting myself to this committee to share testimony regarding SCR 4017.

I have over 30 years' experience working with domestic violence and sex trafficking victims, organizations, shelters and other support services. I am an Ambassador for Shared Hope International, a sex trafficking prevention organization with over 1000 trained ambassadors, and one of the nation's leading policy and political action teams. I have worked with organizations including the Pierce County Coalition for Domestic Violence and the Women's Crisis Shelter in Williston, ND. I have training through Shared Hope, Operation Underground Railroad and the Association for the Recovery of Children. I am a US Army Veteran, and since the murder of my sister in an act of domestic violence in 1984, I believe the Lord has called me to this vocation. I am the Founder of Archangel Miniustries, through which I work with victims, organizations and church groups. One of my primary goals is to educate men on the dangers of pornography, buying sex and the effect it has on them, the community, and the women exploited for those uses.

I fully believe in this resolution, as pornography is most definitely a public health hazard, which is growing at a very rapid rate.

The porn industry is a 100-billion-dollar industry worldwide and the United States accounts for approximately 13 billion of that. There is definite link between the porn industry and sex trafficking, especially minors. The same victims are being used in dance clubs, pornographic videos, and prostitution.

Most experts agree that 90% of males and 20% of females between 14- and 18-years old watch pornography. 46% of adult males and 16% of adult females consume pornography on a frequent basis.

Pornography increases sexual violence. Research indicates that consumers of porn are more likely to objectify others sexually, dehumanize others and likely to express intentions to rape. They are more likely to blame victims of sexual assault, support violence against women and commit violent sexual acts themselves. 15% of videos suggested to new porn users on websites describe acts of sexual violence. Many of the targets of the violence and aggression in porn respond to it with pleasure, sending a message that sexual aggression and violence is more desirable.

Scientific research has shown that high levels of porn consumption can impact a person's neurobiology in a similar way as other behavioral addictions such as drugs and alcohol. Porn can take our brains' natural stimuli and our desire for intimacy and give us more quantity, more exaggerated, and more heightened versions of that desire. Over time, porn can change what we perceive as normal, twist what we find exciting, and make real intimacy seem less interesting by comparison. There seems to be a trend towards younger generations of men

and women avoiding actual relationships because they are not as exciting as their virtual relationships with pornography.

Several studies have found a link between consuming pornography and low self-esteem, anxiety, loneliness and depression. I can tell you through my personal experience, this is very real. The users I have counseled are filled with shame, guilt and self-loathing. Most porn consumers find that porn is very hard to quit. While some are not addicts in a clinical sense, many experts agree that pornography consumption is a behavior that can, in fact, qualify as an addiction in many cases. Regardless of whether someone's porn consumption is classified as an addiction, compulsion, or simply an unhealthy habit, quitting porn can be a difficult process.

I believe identifying pornography as a public health hazard would be a great step in starting to combat this fast-growing problem. Making resources available for education of young people, parents and educators, as well as treatment and peer groups for those involved would be prudent.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this issue, I will gladly answer any questions you may have.

Tod Fossetta

Archangel Ministries