

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 35

By Beavers

A RESOLUTION to recognize pornography as a public health hazard leading to a broad spectrum of individual and public health impacts and societal harms.

WHEREAS, pornography is creating a public health crisis, and therefore its harms are beyond the capability of the individual to address alone. Rather, efforts to prevent pornography exposure and addiction, to educate individuals and families concerning its harms, and to develop recovery programs must be addressed systemically in ways that hold broader influences accountable in order to counter the sexually toxic environment it perpetuates; and

WHEREAS, pornography is contributing to the hyper-sexualization of teens, and even prepubescent children, in our society. Due to the advances in technology and the universal availability of the internet, young children are exposed to what used to be referred to as hardcore pornography at an alarming rate, with twenty-seven percent of older millennials reporting that they first viewed pornography before puberty. This is leading to low self-esteem and eating disorders, an increase in problematic sexual activity at younger ages, and an increased desire to engage in risky sexual behavior as young adolescents; and

WHEREAS, children and youth are exposed to pornography that often times serves as their sex education and shapes their sexual templates. Because pornography treats women as objects and commodities for the viewer's use, it teaches girls they are to be used and boys to be users; and

WHEREAS, pornography normalizes violence and abuse of women and children. Pornography treats women and children as objects and often depicts rape and abuse as if they were harmless. Moreover, pornography equates violence towards women and children with sex

and pain with pleasure, which increases the demand for sex trafficking, prostitution, and child sexual abuse images/child pornography; and

WHEREAS, pornography has potential detrimental effects on the user such as: emotional, mental and medical illnesses, shaping deviant sexual arousal, difficulty forming or maintaining intimate relationships, brain development and functioning, problematic or harmful sexual behaviors, and addiction; and

WHEREAS, recent research indicates that pornography is potentially biologically addictive, which means the user requires more novelty, which is often more shocking material, in order to be satisfied. This has led to increasing themes of risky sexual behaviors, extreme degradation, violence, and child sexual abuse images/child pornography; and

WHEREAS, pornography use has a detrimental effect on the family as it is linked to lessening desire in young men to marry, dissatisfaction in marriage, and infidelity; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we recognize that pornography is a public health hazard leading to a broad spectrum of individual and public health impacts and societal harms.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in recognizing the public health crisis created by pornography, the State of Tennessee is acknowledging the need for education, prevention, research, and policy change at the community and societal level in order to address the epidemic that is harming the people of our State and our country as a whole.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.