

Eagle Forum Report

successor to The Phyllis Schlafly Report

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Exposing Pornography

“MAINSTREAM” PORNOGRAPHY IS NOT “FREE SPEECH”

by Becky Gerritson, Executive Director Eagle Forum of Alabama

The proliferation and easy accessibility of online pornography — from cell phones, to computers, to hotel TV’s, to retail sex shops and material shared via email — has jaded people to consider pornography as “free speech”. But the truth is that the vast majority of pornography today is illegal. Obscene material is illegal. Hardcore pornography, which has become mainstream, commonly depicts themes of incest, racism, sexual violence, and statutory rape. The content is unfiltered and unlimited.

For the past decade, the U.S. Justice Department has been negligent in prosecuting pornography producers and distributors. As a result, pornographers have proliferated and become a multi-billion-dollar industry, while our government has taken a hands-off approach.

It was not always that way. During the Reagan administration, the Department of Justice was very successful in finding and prosecuting pornography producers and distributors. Obviously, the age of the internet has fueled the porn proliferation. Pornography is now rampant and is out of control; even the youngest in our society can easily access pornography, sometimes by accident and often times deliberately. It is time to implore

the Department of Justice to enforce the obscenity laws that are already on the books and prosecute pornography producers and distributors.

Does Pornography Impact Society?

Pornography is not only a moral issue. Scientific studies confirm that there are detrimental physical changes that take place in the brain when pornography is frequently viewed. There is ample proof of direct correlations between pornography and the breakdown of relationships and families. Pornography fuels violence. Most alarmingly, child-on-child sexual abuse has skyrocketed, because children see sexual violence as normal behavior. All of this sexual exploitation is having a significant effect on our communities. Here are some facts from EndSexualExploitation.org:

Pornography Is Pervasive:

- **It’s Everywhere:** Young children are now exposed to hardcore pornography at an alarming rate, with 27 percent of older millennials (age 25-30) reporting that they first viewed pornography *before* puberty. Of young people aged 13 to 24, 64 percent actively seek out pornography *at least weekly*.

- **Both Male and Female Users:** While hardcore pornography users are typically male, female use is increasing. Teenage girls and young women are significantly more likely to actively seek out porn than women over age 25.
- **Unmanageable at the Individual Level:** The depictions of softcore and hardcore pornography are pervasive in popular culture. The easy accessibility via streaming



and mobile devices produce problems and significant risks outside the ability of individuals and families to manage on their own.

- **Like the Tobacco Industry, the Pornography Industry has Created a Public Health Crisis.** Despite tobacco’s former widespread use and acceptance in American culture, once its harms became apparent, society took action and adopted dramatic new policies to limit the harmful effects of smoking.

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ing. Similarly, we believe that people need to be protected from pornography exposure and be made aware of the risks associated with pornography use. Additionally, pornography should not be socially endorsed, normalized, or presented as “cool”.

Impact on Sexual Violence:

- **Pornography Teaches that Women Enjoy Sexual Violence:** An analysis of the 50 most popular pornographic videos (those bought and rented most



often) found that 88 percent of scenes contained physical violence, and 49 percent contained verbal aggression. Of the aggressive acts depicted, a whopping 87 percent were perpetrated against women, and 95 percent of the victims' responses were either neutral or expressions of pleasure.

- **Pornography Is Linked to Increased Sexual Violence:** A 2015 meta-analysis of 22 studies from seven countries found that the consumption of pornography was significantly associated with increases in verbal and physical aggression, among both males and females.
- **Pornography Is Linked to Increased Female Sexual Victimization:** A study of 14 to 19-year-olds found that females who watched pornographic videos were at significantly greater

likelihood of being victims themselves of sexual harassment or sexual assault.

Impact on the Brain:

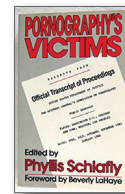
- **The Research Is In:** Since 2009, there have been 30 major studies that have revealed porn has negative and detrimental impacts on the brain.
- **Pornography Use Shrinks the Brain:** A 2014 study found that increased pornography use is linked to decreased brain matter in the areas of motivation and decision-making, plus porn causes impaired impulse control and desensitization to sexual reward.
- **Pornography is Like Cocaine:** Pornography hijacks the brain's reward systems the same way that cocaine does.
- **The Addiction Gets Worse:** A 2015 study from Cambridge found that pornography use can drive novelty-seeking, so users need more and more extreme content over time in order to achieve the same level of arousal.

Impact on Sexual Diseases:

- **Pornography and STIs:** Pornography use among adult males in America is associated with increased engagement in sexual behaviors that increase the risk of sexual transmitted infections. In multiple studies, internet pornography consumption was connected with having sex with multiple partners, engaging in paid sex, and having extramarital sex.
- **Increased STIs Among Adolescent Minority Females:** Exposure to X-rated movies among African-American females 14 to 18 years old was associated with increasing these attitudes: not using condoms, having

Pornography's Victims

In 1987, Phyllis Schlafly published *Pornography's Victims*, which excerpts the testimony given to the U.S. Department of Justice's Commission on Pornography. As she wrote in the introduction:



Pornography corrupts and absolutely uncontrolled pornography corrupts absolutely...pornography is addictive...those who become addicted crave more and more bizarre and more perverted pornography, and become more callous toward their victims. Pornography changes the perceptions and attitudes of men toward women, individually and collectively, and desensitizes men so that what was once repulsive and unthinkable eventually becomes not only acceptable but desirable. What was once fantasy becomes reality. Thus conditioned and stimulated by pornography, the user seeks a victim.

multiple sex partners, having sex more frequently, not using contraception during the last intercourse, not using contraception in the past six months, having a strong desire to conceive, and testing positive for chlamydia.

Impact on Females:

- **Negative Body Image and Pressure to Perform Pornographic Acts:** As a result of viewing pornography, women reported a lowered self body image, criticism from their partners regarding their bodies, increased pressure to perform acts seen in pornographic films, and less actual sex. Men reported being more

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Editor's Note:

Two Eagle Forum of Alabama leaders, General Counsel Margaret Clarke and Executive Director Becky Gerritson, attended the 2019 Coalition to End Sexual Exploitation Global Summit in Washington, D.C. in June. According to Becky, "I have never observed a cause with such diversity. The attendees ranged from radical feminists to conservative Christians, men and women, millennials to grandparents, all races and socioeconomic status. We were all there learning and working together with the commitment to eliminate all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation."

"The speakers presented on a wide range of topics related to human trafficking which included prevention and intervention, addiction, advice from service providers, the negative effects of legalizing prostitution, assessing threats and opportunities with technology, legislation. But the main focus this year was on pornography and almost all of the speakers, no matter their topic, drew a connection to pornography as the number one fuel for sex trafficking."

critical of their partners' body and less interested in actual sex.

- **Increased Marital Rape:** Males who use pornography and go to strip clubs were found to engage in more sexual abuse, stalking, and marital rape than abusers who do not use pornography or go to strip clubs.

Impact on Males:

- **Pornography-Induced Erectile Dysfunction:** A 2015 study on pornography users found that 20 percent said "one motive for their

porn use was to maintain arousal with their partner." But it also found that though pornography use was linked to higher sexual desire, the result was lower overall sexual satisfaction and lower erectile function.

- **Young Men and PIED:** Young men are experiencing increasing rates of PIED. In the early 2000s, the PIED rate among European men was approximately 13 percent. In 2011, young Europeans (18-40) had erectile dysfunction rates of 14-28 percent. The dramatic increase in PIED rates among young men coincides with the sharp increase in the availability and pervasiveness of internet pornography.
- **Negative Body Image:** A 2015 study found that men's frequency of pornography use is positively linked to body image insecurity regarding muscularity and body fat, and to increased anxiety in romantic relationships.

Impact on Relationships:

- **Dissatisfaction with Partners:** Research has demonstrated that the more pornography a man watches, the more likely he is to deliberately conjure images of pornography during sex to maintain arousal and to experience decreased enjoyment of intimate behaviors with a partner.
- **Extramarital Affairs:** A study found that persons who are having an extramarital affair were more than three times more likely to have used internet pornography than ones who had lacked affairs. Other research affirms that pornography consumption is associated with more positive attitudes towards extramarital affairs.

Please download the *Pornography & Public Health: Research Summary* and see research citations here: EagleForum.org/porn

Eagle Forum Is Poised To Act

The statistics make it clear that pornography is not just affecting a few individuals. Porn is pervasive throughout our culture and is having a significant negative impact on a large percentage of our population. We are past the point of being able to deal with the crisis on an individual level.

Our government has previously proclaimed other issues as a health crisis, such as tobacco smoking, AIDS/HIV, and lead poisoning. The government teamed up with corporations and public opinion specialists to bring attention and to solve these epidemics. Science is now confirming our concerns on the societal harms of pornography and Eagle Forum is poised to act. We are supporting the bi-partisan movement to declare pornography a public health crisis.

Twelve states have already passed resolutions declaring pornography as a public health crisis: Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Utah, and Virginia. The more states that pass resolutions, the more pressure there will be for passing one at the national level. A sample resolution written by the National Center on Sexual Exploitation in 2018 is on the next page. Please consider this template for your state. 

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SAMPLE STATE RESOLUTION ON PORNOGRAPHY

Whereas, pornography is creating a public health crisis;

Whereas, pornography perpetuates a sexually toxic environment;

Whereas, 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;

Whereas, pornography is contributing to the hyper-sexualization of teens, and even prepubescent children, in our society.

Whereas, due to advances in technology and the universal availability of the internet, young children are frequently exposed to what used to be referred to as hardcore, but is now considered mainstream pornography;

Whereas, a study of university students found that 93% of boys and 62% of girls had seen internet pornography during adolescence;

Whereas, this exposure is leading to low self-esteem and body image disorders, an increase in problematic sexual activity at younger ages, and greater likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behavior such as sending sexually explicit images, hookups, multiple sex partners, group sex, and using substances during sex as young adolescents;

Whereas, exposure to pornography often serves as children's and youths' sex education and shapes their sexual templates;

Whereas, 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;

Whereas, pornography normalizes violence and abuse of women and children;

Whereas, pornography treats women and children as objects and often depicts rape and abuse as if they were harmless;

Whereas, pornography increases the demand for sex trafficking, prostitution, and child sexual abuse images (i.e., child pornography);

Whereas, potential detrimental effects on pornography's users can impact brain development and functioning, contribute to emotional and medical illnesses shape deviant sexual arousal and lead to difficulty forming or

maintaining intimate relationships, as well as problematic or harmful sexual behaviors and addiction;

Whereas, recent research indicates that pornography is potentially biologically addictive, which means the user requires more novelty, often in the form of more shocking material, in order to be satisfied;

Whereas, this biological addiction leads to increasing use of pornography featuring themes of risky sexual behaviors, extreme degradation, violence, and child sexual abuse images (i.e., child pornography);

Whereas, pornography use is linked to lessening desire in young men to marry, dissatisfaction in marriage, and infidelity;

Whereas, this link demonstrates that pornography has a detrimental effect on the family unit;

Whereas, the obscenity industry considers the line of legality to be drawn by prosecutors, not by legislators, and pornographers in many parts of the country responded by self-regulating when federal obscenity laws were enforced;

Whereas, overcoming pornography's harms is beyond the capability of the afflicted individual to address alone;

Now, therefore, be it resolved, That the Legislature of the State of _____ recognizes 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 the Legislature calls upon the U.S. Department of Justice and _____ District Attorneys to vigorously enforce federal and state obscenity laws against commercialized obscenity and calls upon Congress the address the crisis problem of children accessing pornography on the internet;

Be it further resolved, That the Legislature recognizes the need for education, prevention, research, and policy change at the community and societal level in order to address the pornography epidemic that is harming the people of our state and nation;

Be it further resolved, That a copy of this resolution be sent by the Clerk of _____ to the Attorney General of the United States, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, and each member of the _____ congressional delegation. 