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Shielding Children's Retinas from Egregious Exposure on the Net "Screen" Act (H.R. 1690/S. 737)

Sexually explicit materials and pictures have become increasingly easy to access through social media and internet websites. Even with parental restrictions and filters, illicit content can often slip through.

Tragically, nearly 80% of children between the ages of 12 and 17 have been exposed to pornography online with the average age of first exposure at 11 years old. Much of this content glorifies aggressive, abusive, and non-consensual acts. As children view this type of content, it damages their brains leading to their emulation of these same behaviors. Additionally, it has caused children to struggle with addiction, body-image disorders, and increases in problematic risky sexual behaviors.

Currently, 25 states have enacted age verification on websites with adult content while 17 states have declared exposure to pornography a serious mental health issue. The Supreme Court recently upheld Texas's age verification law in *Free Speech Coalition v. Paxton*.

The SCREEN Act will require all commercial pornographic websites to adopt age verification technology to ensure a child cannot access pornographic content. Eagle Forum endorses this bill and encourages its immediate passage. The bill:

- Requires real age verification - simply entering in a birthdate will no longer be acceptable
- Mandates IP address verification and public transparency of the process
- Implements data security requirements
- Prohibits companies from collecting unnecessary data (beyond user's age) and from retaining information longer than necessary
- Requires regular audits to ensure compliance
- Directs GAO to report on compliance and issue recommendations to Congress.

Rep. Mary Miller (R-IL) sponsors the House version and Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) sponsors the Senate version. A markup is hopeful in the House Committee on Energy and Commerce in September.