

Written Testimony to the House Health Committee

Hearing Title:

House Resolution 180: Declaring Pornography a Public Health Crisis.

Hearing Date/Time:

Tuesday, September 17, 2019, 11:00 a.m.

Witness/Submitter:

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Chairman Derek Merrin, Vice Chairman Don Manning, Ranking Member Janine Boyd and Members of the House Health Committee; my name is Marshawna Hoyte, and I am a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor with Thriving Families Counseling, LLC, thank you for the opportunity to share concerning HR 180, Declaring Pornography a Public Health Crisis. I am testifying in favor of HR 180.

As a counselor, I have first-hand experience working with individuals, including adolescents, families, and couples who have been directly impacted by pornography. It is disheartening to see on a weekly basis, relationships, marriages, families, and individuals in crisis as a result of something that has been considered, "not a big deal" in our society. Pornography is an example of the leaky faucet that we decided not to fix and now it has become a flood that needs immediate attention.

As I work with individuals whose lives are greatly impacted by pornography in some way, shape, or form, I am disheartened by the destruction of the family system. Husbands who cannot bond with their wives in a healthy way, wives being forced to re-enact fantasies and are sobbing on my couch as a result, young people who desire to turn off porn but simply cannot because they are addicted, adult men and women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse and now have Post Traumatic-Stress Disorder and cannot have a healthy intimate relationship, partners in relationships feeling rejected, unwanted, and alone because their significant other cannot stop watching others on a screen.

I am reminded of a specific instance when a husband could not stop having sex with prostitutes which landed him in jail and his wife humiliated, paranoid, extremely anxious and with PTSD anytime she heard police helicopters because this is the sound she heard when they came to arrest her husband. As I listened to their story, I asked a question before the session ended, "Is pornography a part of your life?" And, not to my astonishment, he reluctantly answered, "yes." This allowed me to educate he and his wife on the effects of pornography and helped them make the connection with what was happening. Although they are now educated, it does not take away their wounds. Many tears, many heated sessions, a lot of anger, resentment, and anxiety still exists to this day. This is a vicious cycle that spirals downward over time and leads to challenges such as depression, and extreme anxiety, which is occurring at alarming rates across the board. And it doesn't just end there, but it bleeds into the work environment, and the school environment as well. There is not an area in a person's life that does not get effected in an unhealthy way by viewing pornography.

While social media portrays the happily-ever after façade of pornography and sexualization, the hard-core truth is that it leads to a serious health crisis for the victims. Some may say that pornography is a free choice that individuals have, which is true, but every choice comes with a price and the cost is far too high. Without societal parameters in place, barbaric behavior follows and that is evident by the increase in the sex trafficking of human beings, including our children. When did it become acceptable to treat humans like mere objects for sexual fantasies and pleasure? I'll tell you when, when we failed to use a prevention perspective instead of the intervention approach and now, here we are in the state of a public health crisis and therefore I urge you to support HR 180!

Thank you for your time,

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