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COMMUNITY VALUES**

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September 17, 2019

To: Chairman Derek Merrin
Vice Chairman Don Manning
Ranking Member Janine Boyd
Members of the House Health Committee

From: Aaron Baer
President, Citizens for Community Values

Re: Support of HR 180, Declaring Pornography a Public Health Crisis

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Boyd and Members of the House Health Committee:

My name is Aaron Baer and I am the president of Citizens for Community Values, Ohio's Family Policy Council.

In 1983, a group of pastors in Cincinnati met at College Hill Presbyterian Church to discuss how pornography and obscenity were harming Southwest Ohio's children and families.

Out of that meeting, my organization was birthed. Since then, we have been a leader in fighting back against the exploitative practices of the pornography industry. While our organization has grown to take on other issues, fighting against the abuse of women and children remains central to our mission.

It is why we are so grateful to Representative Jena Powell for introducing this resolution, and to Chairman Merrin for giving it a hearing today.

America is in the midst of a great awakening on two important fronts.

First, thanks to the courage of a handful of men and women who survived sexual abuse, the #MeToo movement has caught the national spotlight.

Across the country, people have stepped forward to expose their abusers, and hold them accountable. For far too long, the powerful in our country have been allowed to use their political, societal, or professional status to pressure their victims into silence. Yet more and more, these victims are finding support and their voice to stand up and speak out.

Second, our nation is being awakened to the horrors of human trafficking. For many, the idea of sex slavery seemed like something that could only happen in far off countries. Yet as we've seen women and children in America are not immune to this scourge. As we sit here today, there are minors being trafficked in this very city.



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This issue is especially prevalent in Ohio – the nonpartisan National Human Trafficking Hotline reported that last year, Ohio had the 4th most calls to their hotline reporting incidents of trafficking.

And just last week, Attorney General Dave Yost’s office arrested 104 individuals in a sex trafficking sting. Twenty-four of them were arrested for attempting to meet and have sex with children.

Human trafficking and sexual assault are massive issues. And there have been so many leaders locally and nationally who have used their platform to shine a light on the issue.

However what should be clear is that we’re not being serious about ending assault and trafficking if we’re not having an honest discussion about pornography.

Thanks to the Internet, pornography use is at an all-time high, especially among children. And try as we may to think of pornography use as just something between an individual and their computer screen or smart phone, the reality is that every time you view pornography, there is a host of victims left behind. Furthermore, studies have shown that it warps the way you think about sex and how you view other people.

The data also shows that while not everyone who views pornography goes on to rape a child or assault a coworker, virtually every rapist and abuser is a user of pornography. It is the common thread.

As for human trafficking, studies show that pornography is a tool for human traffickers to increase profit, exert control, and wreck the reputations of their victims by pornographic exploitation.

A legal research article here by Lieutenant Allison Luzwick for the Northwestern University Law Review Online notes that:

“Traffickers can use violent or nonviolent means to coerce victims into producing pornography that, to the viewer, appears consensual.”

“Additionally, traffickers often force prostituted victims to make pornography by posting pictures or videos of them online as advertisement or by profiting off of pornographic material created while they engaged in prostitution.

In a 2003 survey, 49% of people “currently or recently in prostitution” reported that their traffickers made pornographic material of them while they were engaged in prostitution. The experience of victimization may even be exacerbated by the existence of pornographic images. Victims feel as if they cannot escape their experience because the images and films exist on the internet, where anyone can view them at any time, meaning “each time [an] image is viewed, the victim is re-victimized.”



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As former porn “actress” Linda Boreman put it, “every time someone watches that film, they are watching me being raped.”

The resolution before you goes into great detail about these and other harms, and makes it clear that one way everyone can help fight against the exploitation and assault of women and children is to abandon pornography.

In closing, deep down, we all know there is something wrong with porn. At its core, it’s taking men and women who are made in the image of God, and dehumanizing them into sexual objects for the viewers pleasure.

By supporting this resolution, you’re helping send the message that Ohio values women, children, and victims. Your acknowledging the serious health and relational consequences of pornography. And you’re encouraging Ohioans to act responsibly and think twice about dehumanizing their neighbor.

I encourage you to support HR 180. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Citizens for Community Values (CCV) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that endeavors to create an Ohio where God’s blessings of life, family, and religious freedom are treasured, respected, and protected.

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