February 10, 2020

Re: Testimony as it relates to HR 180

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Health Committee:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to share in this great democratic process that our nation affords us under the Constitution and I look forward to sharing with you my encouragement to support HR 180. I have had the blessing of working with the Probation Department of Darke County since 2012. I have grown in my understanding of people who struggle with addictions of various kinds. I have experienced the shock of having an individual in a group setting who appeared to be doing well for weeks only to be found dead later that same night in a parking lot from an overdose. I have also had the blessing of seeing those on probation, who when given tools to succeed, have done just that – succeed! I don’t have to convince anyone here about the opioid crisis that we have experienced as a nation.

When it comes to the arena of sexual addiction and pornography it is a tougher sell. People aren’t overtly dying from pornography – it doesn’t seem to draw the attention that a world health crisis brings and yet pornography has devastating consequences. If you have seen the brain scans of a heroin addict and a sexual/porn addict, they are virtually identical as it relates to the damage to the brain.

I was ignorant of pornography and its effects until January of 2017 when I was tasked with coming up with a solution for the damaging effects that it was having within the church of all places. The MeToo Movement has only served to bring further into light how sexually broken we are as a culture.

I have experienced young people sharing their stories of sexual abuse at a very young age -- then turning to pornography as a means to medicate their shame and pain. The ugly cycle goes something like this: viewing porn, self-gratifying, the brief shot of pleasurable dopamine that follows, only to be taken back almost immediately right back into the original place of shame and pain and feeling stuck.

The law of diminishing returns serves to require harder core porn tomorrow than in did today to bring satisfaction. Risker and riskier behavior results and most often the result is violence toward women and exploitation of children. I can tell you stories that would bring tears, but they are not my stories to tell.

All that I will share is the common thread in all of those sad stories is this. Pornography is the fuel that drives the sexual addict just as opioids drive the drug addict.

When it comes to the war on drugs there are two fronts. One has been to limit supply and the other has been to counsel and help the addict. Both are important.

This resolution, as I understand it, doesn’t trample on anyone’s 2nd Amendment Rights or even reduce the supply of pornography. It simply acts much like the warning label on cigarettes – it provides a caution of sorts. I encourage you as a committee to move this HR180 forward as a means of providing a warning to your constituents.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before each of you. I am happy to respond to any questions.