



Center FOR Christian Virtue

Public Policy. Engagement. Education.

To: Chair Cindy Abrams
Vice Chair Josh Williams
Ranking Member Richard Brown
House Criminal Justice Committee

From: David Mahan
Policy Director
Center for Christian Virtue

Re: Support for HB295

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee,

My name is David Mahan and I am testifying on behalf of the Center for Christian Virtue, Ohio's largest Christian public policy organization. I am here today to emphatically support the passage of the Innocence Act (HB 295), which will help prevent minors from viewing explicit content online, and protect them from an industry that is internationally known for child exploitation.

As with most age-old vices, today's pornography is a lot more pervasive and far more dangerous than what most adults might remember hearing about growing up. With the rise of social media and children accessing smartphones at younger and younger ages, kids are more vulnerable than ever.

- The first exposure to pornography is occurring between 9-12 years of age.
- By 17, 75% of kids have been exposed to pornography, with nearly 60% of those exposures being inadvertent.
- 1 in 4 internet searches are for porn
- 88% of porn depict some form of sexual violence
- 53% of male adolescents believe that pornography is an accurate representation of sex.
- Male adolescents who are exposed to frequent pornographic material may also exhibit higher levels of sexual aggression compared with those with infrequent exposure to pornography.¹

¹ [Fam Med Community Health](https://doi.org/10.1136/fmch-2022-001776). 2023; 11(1): e001776. Published online 2023 Jan 17. doi: [10.1136/fmch-2022-001776](https://doi.org/10.1136/fmch-2022-001776)



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No one knows more about that last point than my friend Jon Uhler. Jon is a Psychological Services Specialist, who created the nation's first successful intensive treatment program in long-term solitary confinement for the "worst-of-the-worst" sexual offenders within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. After conducting hundreds of risk evaluations and sex offender psychological evaluations for parole consideration, Jon realized the terrifying connection between pornography and sexual predators. He often states that,

"The reality is that 100% of sex offenders were actively involved in pornography prior to offending, and 100% of child sex offenders were charged with possession of child porn. Simply put, you have no sex offending without the perpetrator having become deeply addicted to, and involved in, the use of pornography"

To add a bit more perspective to who it is that HB295 is attempting to shield Ohio children from, the adult movie industry releases about 11,000 films per year, compared to Hollywood's 400, and the biggest player in that industry is Pornhub. Pornhub is the 4th most visited website on the planet, with nearly 11 billion monthly visits. Only Google, Youtube and Facebook log more visitors.²

That's a lot of influence for an industry and a company plagued with corruption. Just a few months ago the US Attorney's Office ordered Pornhub's owner to pay \$1.8 million to resolve a nationwide probe of sex trafficking ties. In 2020, a New York Times article entitled, "The Children of Pornhub", two-time Pulitzer Prize winning investigative journalist Nicholas Kristof revealed the industry leader's nefarious history of promoting Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM). Kristof writes,

"Yet there's another side of the company: Its site is infested with rape videos. It monetizes child rapes, revenge pornography, spy cam videos of women showering, racist and misogynist content, and footage of women being asphyxiated in plastic bags. A search for "girls under18" (no space) or "14yo" leads in each case to more than 100,000 videos. Most aren't of children being assaulted, but too many are. After a 15-year-old girl went missing in Florida, her mother found her on Pornhub – in 58 sex videos. Sexual assaults on a 14-year-old California girl were posted on Pornhub and were reported to the authorities, not by the company but by a classmate who saw

² <https://www.semrush.com/trending-websites/global/all>



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the videos. In each case, offenders were arrested for the assaults, but Pornhub escaped responsibility for sharing the videos and profiting from them.”³

While testifying in opposition to a similar bill before the California State Assembly last week (AB 3080), the Executive Director of the Free Speech Coalition, the trade organization for the addiction for profit, adult entertainment industry, concluded her remarks by stating that, **“WE WANT MINORS OFF OUR SITES JUST AS MUCH AS YOU DO”**.⁴ However, I and apparently the entire committee that voted unanimously in favor of the bill, question the industry’s desire to protect millions of vulnerable children from themselves. After all, if the premier professional association of an adult entertainment industry that rakes in annual revenues of \$12 billion nationally and \$97 billion globally,⁵ has yet to figure this out, why should we expect them to do so now? In fact, similar age-verification laws have passed across the country, and instead of investing in solutions to, “keep minors off their site”, Pornhub has instead chosen to abandon their operations in each of the 7 states.

In closing, as a father, and former national youth advocate and minister, I would like to personally thank Representative Demetriou for leading the charge on this critically important piece of legislation that has received bipartisan support all across the country. The Missouri House recently passed a similar bill 146-0, and I would hope that this committee would be just as unified in support of protecting children by passing the Innocence Act without delay.

Thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of this proposed legislation. If the committee has any questions for me, I will do my best to answer them.

The Center for Christian Virtue (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. www.ccv.org -- (513) 733-5775

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/04/opinion/sunday/pornhub-rape-trafficking.html?searchResultPosition=1>

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDgnAPlcVYY>

⁵

<https://gitnux.org/adult-entertainment-industry/#:~:text=The%20statistic%20indicates%20that%20the.%2412%20billion%20is%20generated%20annually>