



Lora Current, Ohio State Director
Heritage Action For America
May 21, 2024

Proponent Testimony on HB 295

Chair Abrams and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony supporting House Bill 295. My name is Lora Current and I am the Ohio State Director at Heritage Action for America, a national grassroots organization with over two million activists nationwide, including thousands of Ohioans.

Heritage Action urges the Criminal Justice Committee to support HB 295.

HB 295 is a much-needed step to protect children from the dangers of harmful online content, such as pornography. This important legislation would protect children in Ohio by mandating reasonable age verification processes before allowing access to content harmful to minors.

Despite substantial evidence of the harmful impact of obscene content on adolescent mental health,¹ both Congress and the Courts have failed to implement adequate measures to protect children from platforms that promote problematic content, namely pornography. As a result of the federal government's inaction, the responsibility to safeguard children falls upon the states.

Currently, pornographic material is readily accessible online. In fact, 80 percent of 12-17 year-olds and 37 percent of children 9-11 years old have been exposed to sexually explicit material while online.² Adolescent exposure to harmful material is often linked to pornographic addiction which can result in dire consequences, including mental health issues like anxiety and depression.³

Requiring age verification is an effective and common-sense approach to protecting children from obscene content online. A recent poll showed 83 percent of Americans support age

¹ Frederick, Kara. "Social Media Is Hurting Kids, but a Fix May Be on Horizon." The Heritage Foundation (2022). <https://www.heritage.org/technology/commentary/social-media-hurting-kids-fix-may-be-horizon>.

² Chestnut Tutor, Annie "The Need for Federal Legislation Requiring Age Verification for Porn Websites" The Daily Signal (2023) <https://www.dailysignal.com/2023/12/19/need-federal-legislation-requiring-age-verification-porn-websites/>

³ Biello-Taylor, Amber "The Connection Between Pornography and Depression" Addiction Center (2024) <https://www.addictioncenter.com/drugs/porn-addiction/depression/>

verification laws aimed at pornography.⁴ Currently, seven states have already passed age verification legislation similar to HB 295.⁵ Ohio has an opportunity to join those states by passing pragmatic legislation like HB 295 which prioritizes the safety and security of our children.

We ask you to support HB 295.

Thank you for your time and attention on this important issue.

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⁴ Movie Guide “Most Americans Want Age Verification on Porn Sites, Study Shows” (2023)
<https://www.movieguide.org/news-articles/most-americans-want-age-verification-on-porn-sites-study-shows.html>

⁵ Burgess, Becky “US State Law Comparisons for Adult Content” The Age Verification Providers Association (2023)
<https://avpassociation.com/us-state-law-comparisons-for-adult-content/>