



Representative Jena Powell

Ohio's 80th House District

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and Members of the Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to present sponsor testimony today on H.R. 180, a resolution to declare that pornography is creating a public health crisis in relation to the increase in sex trafficking, abuse of women, and minors.

Ohio is the fourth worst state in the United States for human sex trafficking (this is according to statistics compiled by the National Human Trafficking Hotline and the U.S. Marshalls Office).

- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo delivered the Trafficking in Persons report, which is created annually by the State Department to document human trafficking in the year prior. He stated, "The United States is the number one consumer of sex worldwide. So we are driving the demand as a society." At the heart of the human trafficking trade in America is simple economics: Supply and demand.
- Pornography is integral to prostitution and coerced sexual acts, and over half of sex trafficking victims report that they were required to learn and perform according to pornographic media. Please refer if you wish to the study in front of you conducted by psychologist Melissa Farley. There is also a study in front of you from the Northwestern University Law Review discussing how human traffickers force those they have trafficked into pornographic videos as a way to entrap them.

According to a 2016 Barna Group survey, 64% of young people (aged 13-24) proactively seek out pornography weekly.

It is crucial to understand pornography as a form of violence against women. Mainstream pornography consists of socially sanctioned acts of direct violence against women.

- An analysis of the 50 most popular pornographic videos found that 88% of the scenes contain physical violence against women and in 95% of these scenes, the woman displays a positive or neutral reaction to the violence. You can find the scholarly article which has the results of these analyses in the stack of articles we passed out to you.

UNICEF.org says that pornography increases the demand for commercialized sex, especially with underage girls and boys.

According to the American Psychological Association, the earlier a boy is exposed to pornography the more likely he is to want power over women, and the later a man is exposed to pornography the more likely he is to engage in playboy behavior. Both having negative impact on our community. Pornography shrinks the brain and the brain reacts to pornography similarly to how it reacts to cocaine. You can see the statistics and research found on a University of Nebraska Lincoln chart.

We live in a time of a pornography epidemic, where young children are exposed and addicted to pornography thus causing a myriad of problematic sexual activity (feel free to look at the Times article in the stack which discusses the problems young men are having with ED due to porn), low self-esteem (for both boys and girls as referenced in multiple articles in front of you), negatively impacting brain development (see the Your Brain on Porn article for information on dozens of studies by neuroscientists and scholars about how pornography affects brain development and behavior), etc.

- Men who watch pornography are more likely to believe that women want to be raped, and to include violent acts of aggression and physical violence against women during sex, having been conditioned by pornography to believe these acts are normal and that women like to be choked, raped, etc. Please see the *Pornography as a Public Health Issue* article we have given you.
- This devaluation of women and children is because of the fact that “when neurologists looked at their brain scans, men’s brains reacted to women as if they were objects, not people.” This is a quote from Dr. Foubert, whose article on the public health harms of pornography is in front of you. His studies, and others, have shown that viewing pornography increases sexual aggression. You may see the article from the Journal of Communication for additional support.

Overall, the factors which compel men and women to enter the pornography industry are the same factors that place individuals at risk for human trafficking. Poverty, abuse, homelessness, and a history of childhood sexual or physical abuse.

- If you go online to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, or to view sex trafficking data collected by the Office of the Ohio Attorney General, you will see these factors listed as risk factors for trafficking.
- Please also reference the Public Health Harms of Pornography summary of peer-reviewed studies and papers

This resolution will not outlaw pornography - this resolution is bringing awareness to the negative impact that pornography has on society, through its contributions to the demand for trafficked persons, violence against women, men, and minors, and its destruction of the brains as well as families of those individuals who are caught in its addicting web.

We want to promote human flourishing and a health society - we must recognize that this includes pushing against pornography and human trafficking for children and families. This

resolution will declare that we in the Ohio House of Representatives, are against human trafficking and the sexual mistreatment of our fellow human beings whether they be women, men, or children. Let us by this resolution encourage families, churches, and businesses on a local level to promote education, prevention, research, and policy changes to confront the proliferation of pornography and human trafficking.

Today is the day to stand up and say enough is enough against the exploitation of women and children in our communities.

I'm happy to take any questions from the committee at this time.