

MP _____
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

DATE _____

Dear MP _____,

Pornography fuels the demand for the purchase of sex; it plays a dominant role in creating sex buyers¹. Pornography also commodifies women; creating a class of women viewed only for how they can meet the needs of men².

I am grateful that Motion M47 received all- party support in the House of Commons.

The Committee's study was brief, but I was pleased that they heard from leading experts³ on the issue like Dr. Gail Dines, President of Culture Reframed; Dr. Mary Anne Layden, Director Sexual Trauma and Psychopathology Program Department of Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania; Lianna McDonald, Director of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection; Cordelia Anderson, Sensibilities Prevention Services; and Dr. Sharon Cooper, Chief Executive for **Developmental and Forensic Pediatrics**. These experts cited their grave concerns about the violence and aggression seen in pornography. This violence becomes normalized for porn viewers and changes their beliefs and behaviors, contributing to rape culture and sexual harassment. Of particular concern are pornography's harmful effects on children, in part because the pre-frontal cortex of the brain in children and youth is still under development, making addiction problematic.

These experts also outlined a number of recommendations which included addressing pornography for the public health crisis it has become, in much the same way as the government undertook a public health initiative to address the harms to society of tobacco⁴. I was very disappointed that the evidence from the above mentioned experts was restricted by an unrealistic requirement that they had published peer-reviewed scientific research. Obtaining such research is full of challenge and would be unethical related to children, because of the exposure to sexually violent and harmful images. I was also disappointed that evidence from counselors and therapists, those with porn induced erectile dysfunction and those suffering with the effects of the harms of porn were not chosen to appear before the committee.

¹ McIntyre, Susan, "The Role of Technology in Human Trafficking", Microsoft White Paper, March, 2015

² Mackinnon, Catharine A. "Pornography as Trafficking." *Pornography: Driving the Demand in International Sex Trafficking*. David E. Guinn and Julie DiCaro. [Los Angeles]: Captive Daughters Media, 2007. 31-42. Print, 34.

³ <http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/HESA/meeting-50/evidence>

⁴ <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/chn-rcts/tobacco-tabagisme-eng.php>

The summary report of the Health Committee focuses almost solely on education. This, in spite of a number of witnesses and briefs stating that education in and of itself as a response to internet pornography is not enough to protect Canadians. Leaving the protection of our children up to parents and educators when the perpetrators of this sexual violence, large and powerful purveyors of pornography and internet service providers, go unrestricted is very inadequate and makes the government complicit in this activity.

I also strongly encourage you to give full consideration to the testimonies of the witnesses and submitted briefs. In so doing, you will find that the weight of the expert evidence points to the government enacting a public health response to the harms of sexually violent online images. Included in this response, should be the following:

1. **Mandate that meaningful age verification** be required for all pornography companies accessible in Canada. The United Kingdom is at work creating the means for this verification and would provide a good model for Canada.
2. **Require that all Canadian internet service providers block all pornography** at that level unless the consumer chooses to opt in. Here again the United Kingdom leads the way in this field, providing a good model. This recommendation would be the best way to protect children from pornography's harms, putting the onus on technology to provide protection alongside parents and educators.
3. **Develop a public health awareness campaign** to educate teachers, medical professionals and parents about the harms of pornography.

As your constituent, I urge you to give consideration to the full content of the witnesses' testimony and that you consider the above recommendations. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Signature_____

Address_____
