

SJR _____ RECOGNIZING PORNOGRAPHY AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IN ALABAMA.

WHEREAS, pornography, including obscenity, is creating a public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, due to advances in technology and the universal availability of the Internet, children, adolescents, and adults are frequently exposed to what used to be referred to as "hardcore pornography" that was legally "obscene", to what is now considered to be "mainstream pornography"; and

WHEREAS, a study of university students found that 93 percent of boys and 62 percent of girls had seen Internet pornography during adolescence; and

WHEREAS, pornography promotes and encourages sexually toxic expectations and behaviors, and it also contributes to the hyper-sexualization of children, adolescents, and adults; in addition, pornography is associated with low self-esteem, as well as body image disorders, eating disorders, an increase in problematic sexual activity at younger ages, and a greater likelihood of engaging

1 in risky sexual behaviors, such as sending sexually explicit
2 images, partaking in "hookups", having multiple sex partners,
3 participating in group sex, and using substances during sex as
4 young adolescents; and

5 WHEREAS, exposure to pornography often replaces
6 age-appropriate sex education for children and youth, which
7 distorts their sexual templates; and

8 WHEREAS, because pornography treats women like
9 objects and commodities for the viewers' use, it teaches
10 younger girls and women that they are to be used and teaches
11 boys and men to be users; pornography often depicts degrading,
12 painful, and aggressive abusive acts as if they are harmless
13 or pleasurable; and

14 WHEREAS, pornography fosters less egalitarian and
15 more hostile sexist attitudes of men towards women, increased
16 acceptance of rape myths, a greater likelihood of sexual
17 harassment or sexually coercive and forceful behavior by
18 adolescents, increased male sexual aggression against women
19 (effects being more pronounced among men who are predisposed
20 to sexual aggression who consume pornography with higher
21 frequency, or who use violent pornography), as well as
22 increased verbal and physical aggression among both male and
23 female pornography consumers; and

24 WHEREAS, pornography increases the demand for sex
25 trafficking by increasing the demand for prostitution and
26 child sexual abuse images; potential detrimental effects on
27 pornography's users can impact brain development and

1 functioning, contribute to emotional and medical illnesses,
2 shape deviant sexual arousal through animal and/or child
3 pornography use, and problematic or harmful sexual behaviors
4 such as child-on-child sexual behaviors that can occur in
5 schools, playgrounds, homes, and other settings; and

6 WHEREAS, research indicates that pornography is
7 potentially biologically addictive, which means that the user
8 requires more novelty, often in the form of more shocking
9 material, in order to be satisfied; this biological addiction
10 leads to an increasing use of pornography that features themes
11 of risky sexual behaviors, extreme degradation, violence, and
12 animal and child sexual abuse images; and

13 WHEREAS, pornography use is linked to difficulty in
14 forming or maintaining intimate relationships, lessening the
15 desire in young men to marry, dependence on thoughts of
16 pornography to create or maintain sexual excitement with a
17 partner, preference for pornography over sexual intercourse
18 with a partner, dissatisfaction in marriage, and infidelity;
19 pornography has a detrimental effect on the family unit as
20 well; and

21 WHEREAS, pornography is a multi-billion dollar
22 industry that finances, creates, and distributes material
23 through the Internet and by other means; the inundation of
24 pervasive and hyper-sexualized materials by the pornography
25 industry desensitizes the community conscience and impedes
26 enforcement of obscenity and harmful-to-minors laws, by a lack

1 of support in the community and a disinterest by law
2 enforcement; and

3 WHEREAS, the obscenity industry considers the line
4 of legality to be drawn by prosecutors, not by legislators,
5 and pornographers in many parts of the country have responded
6 by self-regulating when federal obscenity laws were enforced;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, overcoming pornography's harms is beyond
9 the capability of the afflicted individual to address alone;
10 efforts to prevent pornography exposure and correlated risky
11 or compulsive behaviors, to educate individuals, families, and
12 communities concerning pornography's harms, and to develop
13 effective recovery treatment modalities must be addressed
14 systematically in ways that hold broader influences
15 accountable and utilize public health channels; and

16 WHEREAS, law enforcement must actively enforce laws
17 that protect community standards against materials that
18 unlawfully appeal to prurient interests and are patently
19 offensive, as well as laws that prohibit materials that are
20 harmful to minors; now therefore,

21 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
22 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That we recognize that pornography
23 is a public health hazard that leads to a broad spectrum of
24 individual and public health impacts and societal harms;
25 furthermore, we recognize the need for education, prevention,
26 research, and policy change at the local, state, and national
27 level in order to address the pornography epidemic that is

1 harming the people of our State and nation. BE IT FURTHER
2 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution shall be sent by the
3 Secretary of the State of Alabama to the Secretaries of State
4 Agencies overseeing obscenity prosecution, health and human
5 services, child and family welfare, and education; we direct
6 that the Legislature calls on the U.S. Department of Justice,
7 Alabama Attorney General, and Alabama District Attorneys to
8 vigorously enforce federal and state obscenity and
9 harmful-to-minors laws; we also direct that the Legislature
10 calls on Congress to address the crisis of children and adults
11 accessing pornography and obscenity on the Internet. BE IT
12 FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution shall be sent
13 to the Governor of Alabama, the Secretary of the State of
14 Alabama, the President of the United States, the United States
15 Senate and House of Representatives, the Governors throughout
16 the United States, and each member of the Alabama
17 congressional delegation.