**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE THE NEED OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA TO ADDRESS AND TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT ITS CHILDREN FROM THE PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARD OF INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly recognize that the average age of exposure to pornography is now between nine and eleven years old. With the advances of technology and the universal availability of the Internet, young children are exposed to what is now considered mainstream pornography which used to be referred to as hardcore pornography; and

Whereas, survivors of sex trafficking have reported being used to make pornography without their consent and the nature of pornography is often violent. Viewers are unable to know whether the acts were consensual or made with the exploitation of a sex trafficking victim; and

Whereas, pornography treats women and children as objects and depicts violence, rape, and abuse as if these acts were harmless. This substantially increases the risk of normalizing these deplorable activities; and

Whereas, the early exposure of pornography to teenagers and prepubescent children contributes to the hyper‑sexualization of these individuals and may lead to low self‑esteem, body‑image disorders, an increase in problematic sexual activity and an increased desire among adolescents to engage in risky sexual behavior as pornography often serves as sex education and informs the sexual templates of teenagers and children; and

Whereas, it is critical to recognize the malignant effect that pornography has on society when it is distributed carelessly over the Internet without regard for the disturbing and lasting effects that it can cause; and

Whereas, the members of the General Assembly recognize that pornography is creating a public health crisis and action must be taken to address pornography in a manner similar to public health regulation used in the past to combat issues like smoking, lead poisoning, and HIV/AIDS; and

Whereas, addressing pornography must be done systemically by enacting policies that would help to prevent exposure and addiction, educate individuals on its harmful effects, and develop recovery plans while holding providers accountable. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize the need of the State of South Carolina to address and take steps to protect its children from the public health hazard of Internet pornography.

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