

Maryland Coalition Against Pornography, Inc.

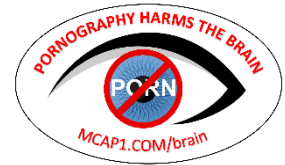
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TOGETHER WE CARE

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In support of HB 1082

MCAP thanks the sponsors of this bill who have thoughtfully sought out an angle to solve an enormous problem facing families today which is beyond the capabilities of parents alone to solve: the dangers to the innocence and safety of our children on the Internet and how ubiquitous "screen time" is affecting the mental health of our youth.

The approach taken by this bill offers a technically simple, elegant solution.

I invite you to watch a 2020 documentary video entitled [CHILDHOOD 2.0](#), which every parent should watch. It is such a wake-up call about the new tech environment today's young generation is grappling with. Interviews with parents and their kids, and with experts in pediatrics and mental health expose some of the frightening facts and statistics. Such as:

53% of American children get a cell phone by age 11. They spend many hours each day on these electronic devices. These devices are worse than slot machines, and so much of the content is "free." Kids (AND adults, who are modelling this behavior) spend many hours each day on them. Statistics say 27% of all unfiltered Internet content is explicit or pornographic, and nearly 50% of children have been exposed to it by age 8. Many (26% of teens between 13-17) actively seek it out. It is becoming their sex education before parents ever begin that process with their kids. In 2019, porn sites received more Internet traffic than Amazon, Twitter and Netflix combined. Social media apps like Twitter, Snap Chat, etc. are occupied by predators and saturated with explicit material that can be shared back door methods like chat features. Frighteningly, much of porn contains physical and verbal aggression and violence. In 2021 alone, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received nearly 85 **million** images, videos, and other files containing or related to child sexual abuse and exploitation and other incident-related content – and those are only what were detected and reported.

Regarding the electronic devices - technology is best when it is easy and intuitive to use. Currently, parents do NOT find that to be the case. Remember – "It takes a village to raise a child." We need to communicate that to device manufacturers and "Big Tech" in general, and get them to join in our responsible "village" here in Maryland. I, and most parents, do not believe it is beyond the capabilities of manufacturers to do this. Government draws regulatory safety guidelines for other industries. Why not this one?

Respectfully submitted,
Peggy Cairns
Education Chairman, MCAP