

SB0780_RichardKaplowitz_UNF
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TESTIMONY ON SB#0780 - POSITION: UNFAVORABLE

Internet–Connected Devices and Internet Service Providers – Default Filtering of Obscene Content (Maryland Online Child Protection Act)

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

OPENING: My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to SB#0780, Internet–Connected Devices and Internet Service Providers – Default Filtering of Obscene Content (Maryland Online Child Protection Act)

There are multiple problems with this bill as written even though the goal is one many might share. The first problem is who defines what is obscene? Secondly, how do you determine the age of the minor accessing information that is inappropriate for their age group? Third, can the filter interfere with searches for health related information or information on the LGBTQ community that is vital for the mental health of the person searching? Fourth, will the requirement to have specific software installed be a cost to the state or the equipment vendor?

These are just some of the challenges I see with this bill. And, according to Psychology Today magazine, there is a question “**Is Porn-Filtering Software Ineffective and Insecure?**”¹

Clearly, we should rely on parents to instill the moral guidance such that their child would not attempt to access inappropriate conduct. And educational facilities should not be put in the position of censorship, one parent might object but another wants their child to have free access to whatever questions about sex or gender or any issue they might wish to research. Maryland should not be in the censorship lane but must promote the free flow of information confident that students will make the right choices when taught, at home and in school, to make good choices and use critical thinking skills to guide them.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on SB0780.

¹ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/women-who-stray/202211/is-porn-filtering-software-ineffective-and-insecure>