
Testimony in Support of HB 693

To: House Judiciary Committee

From: Benet Tribble

Date: 3/2/2026

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair Bartlett, Vice-Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today in strong support of HB 693. This legislation is a critical step to protect Maryland's youth from the harmful, addictive, and increasingly extreme nature of online pornography.

As a Maryland resident and father of 3, I am alarmed by how easily children can access pornographic materials. Simply asking "Are you 18?" is not a filter; it is an open door.

The argument that this is harmless fun is scientifically incorrect. Research shows that pornography acts on the brain similarly to a drug. A 2014 University of Cambridge study found that, like drug addicts, heavy pornography users show heightened brain activity in reward centers, leading to cravings.

Furthermore, brain imaging shows that heavy pornography use is linked to a reduction in grey matter volume in areas responsible for decision-making and impulse control.

Just as with drug addiction, the brain builds a tolerance. To achieve the same level of excitement, users—including minors—must seek out increasingly intense and extreme content. Research confirms that pornography consumption can escalate, with users progressing to more violent or, in some cases, illegal material.

By implementing 3rd party age verification, this bill finally provides a robust, effective barrier, ensuring that our children are not subjected to materials that damage their developing brains, distort their view of human relationships, and create a high risk of addiction.

We require proof of age for alcohol and tobacco. It is time we require the same for the highly addictive, harmful, and extreme content of the pornography industry.

I urge a favorable report on HB 693.

Thank you.

Benet Tribble

