

Maryland House of Delegates
House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee
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Testimony in Support of House Joint Resolution 4

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Good afternoon. I am here to urge that you support House Joint Resolution 4, to declare that the exposure to pornography is a public health hazard.

The number of studies on the harm of pornography is constantly expanding, and [the text of the resolution](#) itself concisely makes the case for why pornography has proven to be so harmful to the public,¹ but I would like to draw attention to pornography's impact on sexual attitudes specifically. Pornography normalizes violence against women and increases the demand for sex trafficking and prostitution.

An analysis of the 50 most popular pornographic videos in the United States found that 88 percent of scenes contained physical violence, and 49 percent contained verbal aggression. Moreover, 87 percent of aggressive acts were perpetrated against women, and 95 percent of their responses were either neutral or expressions of pleasure.²

A 2015 meta-analysis of 22 [studies](#) from seven countries found that the consumption of pornography was significantly associated with increases in verbal and physical aggression, among males and females alike.³

Even a meta-analysis of 46 studies published from 1962 to 1995, comprising a total sample of 12,323 people, showed that pornographic material puts one at increased risk of developing sexually deviant tendencies (31 percent increase in risk), committing sexual offenses (22 percent increase in risk), and accepting rape myths (31 percent increase in risk).⁴

Pornographic websites get [more](#) unique visitors each month than Netflix, Amazon, and Twitter combined.⁵ 79 percent of males ages 18-30 say they are viewing pornography monthly, and 63 percent

¹ Del. Neil Parrott, Del. Lauren Arian, and Del. Susan W. Krebs, "House Joint Resolution 4: Exposure to Pornography - Public Health Crisis" Maryland House of Delegates, House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, February 8, 2019, <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2019RS/bills/hj/hj0004f.pdf> (Accessed February 25, 2019).

² Ana J. Bridges, Robert Wosnitzer, Erica Scharrer, Chyng Sun, and Rachael Liberman, "Aggression and Sexual Behavior in Best-Selling Pornography Videos: A Content Analysis Update," *Violence against Women* 16, no.10 (2010): 1065–1085.

³ Paul J. Wright, Robert S. Tokunaga, and Ashley Kraus, "A Meta-Analysis of Pornography Consumption and Actual Acts of Sexual Aggression in General Population Studies," *Journal of Communication* 66, no. 1 (February 2016): 183–205.

⁴ Elizabeth Oddone Paolucci, Mark Genuis, and Claudio Violato, "A Meta-Analysis of the Published Research on the Effects of Pornography," National Foundation for Family Research and Education, *The Changing Family and Child Development* (1997).

⁵ Alexis Kleinman, "Porn Sites Get More Visitors Each Month Than Netflix, Amazon and Twitter Combined," Huffington Post (December 06, 2017), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/03/internet-porn-stats_n_3187682.html (Accessed February 22, 2019).

say they are viewing it every week.⁶ How can we not stop to think about how that will impact their sexual attitudes towards women?

Pornography has been [dubbed](#) the “The Largest Unregulated Social Experiment In History,”⁷ and it has no doubt contributed to the need for the #MeToo movement.

Pornography consumers may be unaware that the “entertainment” they are consuming may be of victims of sex trafficking. What viewers may be watching is someone’s humiliation being played and distributed over and over again.

Former Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons at the U.S. Department of State, Laura Lederer, [found](#) that 29.3 percent of sex trafficking victims had to recreate scenes from pornography and 17.1 percent were forcibly recorded for pornographic purposes.⁸ Across all ages and in nine different countries, 49 percent of rescued sex trafficking victims [report](#) they were forced to participate in the production of pornographic material.⁹

Traffickers will [force](#) their victims to produce pornographic images as advertisements for selling their victims again.¹⁰ Producing pornography allows traffickers to capitalize twice off of their victims financially.

Also, pornography is often used [by traffickers](#) as a training tool for their victims, so they will know how to perform for buyers.¹¹ It might be better described as what they will have to endure from buyers.

For the state of Maryland, combating violence against women and bringing justice to victims of sex trafficking can start here – by supporting this resolution declaring pornography to be a public health hazard.

I urge you to support House Joint Resolution 4 and thereby take power away from sex traffickers and pornographers.

⁶ Covenant Eyes, “Porn Statistics 2018 Edition” Covenant *Eyes, Inc.*, (Accessed February 22, 2019).

⁷ Donna Rice Hughes, “Internet Pornography: The Largest Unregulated Social Experiment in History,” Enough is Enough (March 31, 2014), <https://enough.org/news/news-204> (Accessed February 22, 2019).

⁸ Laura J. Lederer, Christopher A. Wetzel, “The Health Consequences of Sex Trafficking,” *Annals of Health Law* 23, no.1 (2014), <https://www.globalcenturion.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/The-Health-Consequences-of-Sex-Trafficking.pdf> (Accessed February 22, 2019).

⁹ Melissa Farley Ph.D., et al, “Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries: An Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” *Journal of Trauma Practice* 2, no.3-4 (2003): 33-74, <http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/publications/abstract.aspx?ID=205050> (Accessed February 22, 2019).

¹⁰ National Center on Sexual Exploitation, “Forced sex acts between a trafficked woman or child and a “John” are often filmed and photographed,” StopTraffickingDemand.com, <https://stoptraffickingdemand.com/forced-acts-recorded/> (Accessed February 22, 2019).

¹¹ Janice G. Raymond Ph.D., Donna M Hughes Ph.D., Carol J. Gomez, “Sex Trafficking of Women in the United States: International and Domestic Trends,” National Institute of Justice/The National Criminal Justice Reference Service (2001), <http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/publications/abstract.aspx?ID=187774> (Accessed February 22, 2019).