



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1839</b>		DATE: <b>2/10/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ALLISON HILTON</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>816-651-4262</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>SYNERGY SERVICES</b>		TITLE: <b>VICE PRESIDENT OF YOUTH SERVICES</b>	
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CITY: <b>KANSAS CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>64155</b>
EMAIL: <b>ahilton@synergyservices.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2026 5:30 PM</b>	
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Submitted by Allison Hilton  
 Vice President of Youth Services  
 Synergy Services  
 Kansas City, Missouri

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Allison Hilton, and I serve as Vice President of Youth Services at Synergy Services in Kansas City. I oversee emergency shelter, transitional living, maternity housing, street outreach, and crisis services for youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability. I am submitting testimony in support of HB 1839.

Neuroscience confirms that the prefrontal cortex, responsible for impulse control, risk evaluation, and long-term planning, remains under development into the mid-20s. Meanwhile, the brain’s reward system is highly sensitive to novel and high-stimulus content during adolescence.

Early exposure to explicit sexual material has been associated in peer-reviewed research with:

- Increased rates of anxiety and depressive symptoms
- Distorted beliefs about consent and healthy relationships
- Compulsive usage patterns
- Greater vulnerability to exploitation

National research indicates that many youth encounter pornography before age 13, often unintentionally. For youth with trauma histories, this exposure can reinforce coercive dynamics and complicate recovery.

Missouri already applies age-based restrictions to alcohol, tobacco, gambling, and firearms due to developmental risk. Extending reasonable digital safeguards to commercial adult content platforms is consistent with established regulatory precedent.

**From a child welfare and youth services perspective, age verification represents a targeted harm-reduction strategy that supports healthy development while maintaining adult autonomy.**

**For these reasons, I respectfully urge passage of HB 1839**

**Thank you for your consideration.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>BYRON KEELIN</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-402-0655</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>FREEDOM PRINCIPLE</b>		TITLE: <b>PRESIDENT</b>	
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CITY: <b>BALLWIN</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63011</b>
EMAIL: <b>freedomprinciplemo@protonmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2026 6:18 AM</b>	

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We strongly support Missouri’s legislative efforts aimed at protecting minors from exposure to sexually explicit material online, as reflected in HB1839, HB2921, and HB3015. Each of these bills takes critical steps to require robust age-verification procedures for access to adult content websites, ensuring that commercial entities take responsibility for shielding children from harmful online material. It is notable that these three bills share nearly identical language and intent in holding companies accountable, specifying clear definitions, enforcement provisions, and exemptions for legitimate news and service providers. The underlying framework in each bill thoughtfully balances privacy concerns with practical verification methods and robust penalties for noncompliance.

While we believe all three bills would create meaningful protections for Missouri’s young people, we would like to highlight our particular support for the additional public health warning provisions in HB1839. By requiring explicit warnings about the mental and emotional dangers of pornography, together with information about substance abuse and access to help resources, HB1839 delivers an extra layer of public health protection. These messages are crucial for raising awareness and reducing the stigma faced by individuals and families who may struggle with the consequences of harmful online content. We believe this aspect of HB1839 can empower at-risk youth and their families to seek support, making the bill a more comprehensive solution for safeguarding the well-being of Missouri’s children. Therefore, while each bill is commendable, we encourage the adoption of the public health and substance abuse notification requirements contained in HB1839 as a model for strong, holistic policy.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>CURT WICHMER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-635-7239</b>
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EMAIL: <b>wichmerc@mocatholic.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2026 10:19 PM</b>

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Modern technology provides unprecedented access to adult content for both adults and minors. Restricting access to adult content will help keep this offensive and damaging material from reaching children.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>DAVID WINTON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI NETWORK AGAINST CHILD ABUSE</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 1805</b>		
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>65102</b>
EMAIL: <b>david@wintonpolicygroup.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2026 8:40 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>EMILY VAN SCHENKHOF</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: <b>CHILDRENS TRUST FUND</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>65109</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2026 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>HEIDI OLSON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2026 1:35 PM</b>	
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**TESTIMONY OF HEIDI OLSON, MSN, RN, CPN, SANE-P**  
**Founder and President, Paradigm Shift Training and Consulting**

I am a pediatric sexual assault nurse examiner. Over the last decade, I have provided medical care and collected evidence on hundreds of children in Missouri who have experienced sexual assault, exploitation, and sex trafficking.

Last year, I submitted an Amicus Brief to the U.S. Supreme Court for the Paxton vs. Free Speech Coalition case, which discussed age verification. Much of the data I referred to came from trends that are happening to our kids in MO. The situation we find ourselves in is dire.

In Missouri and across the country, we are seeing a disturbing trend, which is that an increasing number of children are sexually assaulting other children. Data shows that anywhere from 1/3 to almost 1/2 of those committing sexual assaults against children are minors themselves. In fact, the age range most likely to commit sexual assaults are 11–15-year-old-males, 1 with 14-year males being the highest risk to engage in this behavior. 2

There are multiple factors that contribute to a child sexually harming another child 3, but an increasingly common theme we hear from offenders is that pornography has influenced them to sexually act out on another child. Research backs this up with multiple studies showing the correlational and causational relationship between porn use and sexual violence. 4

Let me give you a real-life example of what this looks like, we took care of a traumatized 13-year-old female who told us that her 16-year-old brother came into her room in the middle of the night and stated, “I was looking at porn in my room and can’t stop thinking about it” as he proceeded to sexually assault her.

Children are very susceptible to what they see in pornography. The more they view pornography, the more they want to perform the acts they are seeing. 5 Research shows that early exposure to pornography gives rise to sexual misconduct, leads to violent sex, including strangulation, puts girls at risk for being victimized, is linked to substance use, impairs relationship skills, physically harms the brain, leads to erectile dysfunction, contributes to depression, teaches kids that objectification and exploitation are normal, and is linked with poor body image and self-esteem. 6-17

Most kids stumble upon pornography accidentally the first time they see it, which is why age

verification is so crucial. 18

As if all of this isn't overwhelming enough, pornography is teaching kids that self-exploitation is desirable. We've taken care of teenagers who are being sex trafficked through sites like OnlyFans, and we've seen kids who have sent hundreds of nude photos in exchange for things like gaming tokens or gift cards. The most devastating part is that these precious kids don't recognize they are being exploited or harmed, because they are watching young influencers make millions of dollars in the porn industry, without anyone talking about the trauma, coercion and abuse that occurs when bodies are commodified.

I am barely scraping the surface when it comes to the numerous harms children are experiencing related to pornography. I've talked to countless teens whose sexual abuse has been filmed and shared online among their peers. Can you imagine having to go to school when everyone has viewed your rape on Snapchat like it's nothing? We don't have time to get into the new onslaught of harm that is happening with AI generated pornography, but the stakes are getting higher as technology is rapidly changing.

Age verification isn't a fix all to every single issue online, but it's a strong and proven way to mitigate some of the harm that is deeply impacting our kids and I ask that you pass this much needed legislation.

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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>HELEN TAYLOR</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2026 2:45 PM</b>	

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

Dear Members of the Legislature,  
 Exodus Cry, a national anti-trafficking organization, founded in Missouri in 2008, writes in strong support of HB 1839, legislation that would require websites that publish obscene or indecent images or videos harmful to minors to implement reasonable age-verification methods and prevent access by children.

Since 2021, Exodus Cry has called for laws that protect children from exposure to pornography by requiring pornographic websites to verify that users are at least 18 years old. These common-sense safeguards would protect millions of children from the well-documented harms of early exposure to explicit content. More than 100,000 individuals have signed our Protect Children Not Porn petition, and over 100 anti-trafficking, women’s rights, and child-protection organizations have formally expressed support for age-verification laws.

Research consistently shows that the average age of first exposure to pornography is approximately 11 years old, and continues to drop. In a 2022 survey conducted by Common Sense Media of 1,300 minors, 58% reported being exposed to pornography accidentally. Never before has access to the internet been so pervasive, and as a result, children are increasingly encountering some of the most violent and degrading sexual material imaginable, including incest, bestiality, racist content, and gang-rape scenarios.

Because many pornographic websites lack meaningful age or consent verification, children may also be exposed to real videos involving trafficking victims or minors. As a result of Exodus Cry’s Traffickinghub campaign, Pornhub removed more than 10 million unverified videos in 2020, underscoring the vast scale of this problem. Today, tens of millions of pornographic websites remain accessible online, making it virtually impossible for children to avoid exposure without effective age-verification safeguards.

We have received thousands of messages from individuals describing how underage exposure to pornography negatively impacted their lives. Early exposure has been linked to anxiety, depression, self-loathing, body dysphoria, addiction, sexual dysfunction, and an increased risk of sexual aggression and violence.

HB 1839 reflects the same commonsense approach long accepted in the offline world. Retailers and restaurants are required to make reasonable efforts to verify age before selling alcohol because of the risks such products pose to minors. Websites that distribute obscene material harmful to children should be held to a comparable standard.

Courts have begun to recognize the constitutionality of these protections. In *Free Speech Coalition, Inc. v. Paxton* (5th Cir. 2024), the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit held that Texas’s age-verification requirement survives constitutional scrutiny because it is rationally related to the government’s legitimate interest in preventing minors from accessing pornography.

**Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Texas's age-verification law for pornographic websites, affirming the constitutionality of requiring users to verify their age before accessing explicit content online. The decision marked a pivotal advance in digital child protection and strengthened the legal foundation for similar legislation nationwide. Exodus Cry submitted an amicus brief documenting the prevalence of extreme and violent content in mainstream pornography.**

**Across the country, momentum is growing. As of today, 24 states have enacted age-verification requirements for pornographic websites, with many others actively considering similar legislation. This represents a historic shift toward prioritizing the safety and well-being of children in the digital age. For these reasons, Exodus Cry strongly supports HB 1839 and urges Missouri lawmakers to stand with parents and children by advancing this critical child-protection measure.**

**Sincerely,**

**Helen Taylor**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JEN SCHWEIGERDT</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2026 7:20 PM</b>

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**As adults and mentors, we have a responsibility to protect minors from harm. While this is not a polite topic that people are eager to discuss, we must talk about it. Nothing is more important than the mental health of our children and protecting them from predators.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JEREMIAH MORGAN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MARY CHANT</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-303-6765</b>	
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CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>NEIL GETZLOW</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>913-940-2960</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>STOP SEXUAL EXPLOITATION-KC</b>		TITLE: <b>DIRECTOR</b>	
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CITY: <b>KANSAS CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>64151</b>
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**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

I am writing today in support of HB 1839, HB 2921 and HB 3015 that implements age verification for adult web sites in Missouri.

It is long past time to take the pornography problem in Missouri seriously and address it honestly as a public health issue.

I say this not as a culture warrior, but as someone who lived it. I struggled with a pornography addiction for nearly 40 years, beginning at age 10. Like many others, I used it the way people use drugs or alcohol, to numb emotional pain. In 2020, after confronting the underlying issues in my life and through my Christian faith, I was able to break free. Since then, I have worked with other men who desperately want to stop but find themselves unable to do so.

Their experience is not simply a matter of willpower. A growing body of research suggests that heavy pornography use affects the brain in ways similar to substance addiction. Studies cited by the National Center on Sexual Exploitation indicate that frequent use can alter brain function, particularly in the prefrontal cortex, the area responsible for impulse control, judgment and decision-making. In practical terms, that means diminished self-control and reinforced compulsive behavior.

The consequences are not abstract. Pornography is contributing to broken relationships, emotional withdrawal, and an epidemic of shame and isolation among men. Many suffer in silence, afraid to ask for help, which only deepens loneliness and mental distress. Meanwhile, children today are growing up with instant access to explicit content through their smartphones, content far more graphic and violent than anything previous generations encountered. Parents absolutely have a responsibility to monitor what their children consume. But parental responsibility and public safeguards are not mutually exclusive. Age-verification laws are a reasonable, common-sense step to support families.

Missouri already requires proof of age to purchase alcohol or marijuana because we recognize the harm those substances can cause developing brains. Pornography triggers similar neurological responses. Treating it differently makes little sense.

There is also a side of this issue we too often ignore: the human cost behind the screen. According to a 2020 report from Polaris, the organization that operates the National Human Trafficking Hotline, pornography is a significant driver of sex trafficking in the United States. Beyond exploitation, it shapes attitudes. teaching young men to view women as objects and teaching young women that their

**value lies primarily in sexual performance.**

**This debate is not fundamentally about free speech. It is about mental health, public safety, and human dignity. We regulate products that harm individuals and families. Pornography should be no exception. It is time for honest conversations, and thoughtful regulation, grounded in compassion, evidence, and concern for the well-being of our communities.**

**Neil Getzlow, Stop Sexual Exploitation-KC  
Kansas City, MO  
913-940-2960**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>PAUL DUPONT</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>202-503-2010</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>AMERICAN PRINCIPLES PROJECT</b>		TITLE: <b>POLICY DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>2800 SHIRLINGTON ROAD, STE. 901</b>			
CITY: <b>ARLINGTON</b>		STATE: <b>VA</b>	ZIP: <b>22206</b>
EMAIL: <b>paul@americanprinciplesproject.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2026 4:19 PM</b>	

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

My name is Paul Dupont, and I am the policy director for the American Principles Project, a pro-family public policy organization in Virginia. I am submitting the following testimony in support of HB 1839.

Online porn use today among children constitutes a public health crisis. Recent research suggests the average age of first exposure to adult content is now 12 years old, and as of 2022, 54 percent of children 13 and younger had accessed porn.

By now, the negative impacts of this exposure have been well documented. Porn use has been linked to anxiety, low self-esteem, body-image disorders, and normalization of sexual violence. In addition, the risk for addiction is uniquely high among children and teens because of their continued brain development.

Unfortunately, with smartphone access and social media usage nearly ubiquitous among kids, it has become a herculean task for parents to protect their children's innocence. It is outrageous to simply ask them to "parent better" in these circumstances. They need our help.

Fortunately, there is an obvious and well-vetted solution at hand. Requiring age verification for adult websites would add an important layer of protection to the internet. It is a policy that has proven both workable and popular.

To date, 24 states have passed laws mandating age verification for porn, typically with bipartisan backing. Voters have also been supportive, with polls consistently showing large supermajorities behind the laws. Momentum is even picking up in Congress, with a national law currently moving through the U.S. House.

Age verification has been legally tested and approved. Last year, in Free Speech Coalition v. Paxton, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Texas' age verification law, ruling that such a requirement was constitutional and did not overly burden free speech. HB 1839 follows the same blueprint.

Age verification technology has also been effectively adopted and utilized in other industries. Today, a child cannot buy tobacco or alcohol or place a sports bet online because of age verification. There is no reason the same should not be true for online pornography.

Some have argued against these laws because of supposed risks to privacy. However, the truth is that

**HB 1839 would actually increase privacy, by explicitly prohibiting the retention of any identifying information collected in the verification process. Currently, adult websites are allowed to collect and retain as much user information as they please—and the largest porn sites have some of the most sophisticated data-collection programs in the web industry.**

**Others have argued that adult websites should not be responsible for preventing kids from accessing their content. But make no mistake: this is a supply issue, not a demand issue. These sites exist to hook children early and keep them coming back in perpetuity. They make the content available in the first place, and then do all they can to pass off responsibility to neutral third parties such as browsers, devices, or internet service providers. When someone is polluting our natural environment, we hold the polluter responsible. The same principle should apply in our virtual environment.**

**For over two decades, we have allowed our children unfettered access to increasingly degrading forms of online pornography, and the result has been disastrous. Lawmakers must act to address this problem. That's why we at American Principles Project urge for passage of HB 1839. Thank you.**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1839</b>		DATE: <b>2/10/2026</b>
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>		
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>RACHEL ROBISON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2026 2:49 PM</b>

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

My name is Rachel Robison. When I was seven years old my favorite toys were barbies. I loved playing dress up and would often solely wear princess dresses. About 90% of my childhood photos you can see me in a princess gown, with little plastic heels. I loved the color pink and would line my stuffed animals along my bed at night, saying goodnight to every single one of them, so none of them would feel left out. When I was seven I was exposed to pornography, by another seven year old at a play date. My sweet, innocent heart was opened up to a world of brutality and sexual violence. Within development at age seven, most children are beginning to understand social rules, behaviors and relationships. There is a major need for affirmation in order to build confidence and instill healthy identity in a child. With absolutely zero restrictions, I was able to access porn easily, without even needing to look for it. Though my parents had site blockers, it did not matter. I was able to by pass through, check a box I was "18" and a word I should have been protected from was thrown in my face. At seven years old I had no understanding of what I was looking at, or the damage it would cause. That that one moment in time would cause a 13 year porn addiction. My brain was developing while I watched brutal porn videos where women and men were degraded and treated like animals. To explain to you all in further detail of what many porn videos show here are some real titles of porn videos online today, I retrieved these titles on 1/1/2026:

Quote: " She is not allowed to say no!"

Quote: " Teen tided up for the first time."

Quote: " She loves being used like a piece of meat."

Quote: " Perverted church priest uses an fucks married wife who came to confess"

Quote: " Disobedient Muslim whore"

Quote: " Had to be aggressive with her dumb ass"

Quote: " He made me suck his dick and I choked"

Quote: " Slap and fuck his face like a sex doll- gag the fag"

This is just scratching the surface of the videos produced in the porn industry. It was videos like these that were teaching me who I was and how myself and others should behave within relationships. The porn industry taught me that I was an object, that being hit, degraded and used is not only normal, but a turn on. That if I do not consent that is okay, because I am just an object of pleasure. The porn industry lies to us and tells us that we can learn about sex and sexual preferences by watching porn. Porn is not a healthy form of sexual education. Porn normalizes violence and abuse. Studies show that 10-15 year olds who watch porn are 5 times

more likely to become sexually aggressive, or victims of sexual abuse. It was porn that led me into a toxic view of myself and sex. It was porn that desensitized me to sexual abuse and violence. I remember being 8 years old and feeling like something was deeply wrong with me. I had this pit in my stomach and I could never seem to get it to go away. As I got older and processed what had happened to me I learned that pit was shame. The weight of shame was caused directly from the pornography I had consumed. The shame was heavy and altered my life deeply. I was 11 years old when I started self harming to then later be hospitalized in a psychiatric ward due to extreme self harm and wanting to commit suicide. I went to countless therapy appointments and they would always ask the same thing "what happened to you that caused you to want to self harm, why do you want to kill yourself?" I pondered this question for years, struggling secretly with a porn addiction that I felt too much shame to admit, I always responded with "I don't know." But it was porn. Porn caused me to hate my body, question my worth, isolate myself from others and consume violent graphic content until I felt sick to my stomach. I was diagnosed with anxiety and depression at 11 years old. I had an on going eating disorder from ages 12-20. The string of mental health issues I was facing were rooted in my pornography addiction. Porn stole my innocence and polluted my mind. Creating a dark reality that almost took my life. When I was 16 years old I was sexually assaulted. I remember making it home and running into my bedroom afterwards, looking at myself in the mirror and pulling my lip down, the inside of my mouth was purple with bruises. I was shaking and crying. And I thought to myself " But this is just like porn, that experience was just like porn. I'm supposed to want and like this. I said no, but what does that really mean?" This mindset was brought on by porn and had desensitized me to abuse and sexual violence. It was this mindset that told me to stay in a relationship with my abuser, because my 'no' could never actually mean 'no.' I was simply an object, my desires have no real meaning. This is what the porn industry teaches. This is what was ingrained in my brain at seven years old. I was fulfilling the role porn taught me to be. I was in that abusive relationship from 16-18 years old. It wasn't until I took a mandatory title 9 training in college that I learned I had been assaulted multiple times, and that I was being abused. Porn had made abuse so normal to me that I did not even know that was what was actively happening to me. I truly thought it was normal, that even though I was miserable and in so much pain, that is just my place as a woman. Porn took my childhood away from me. Sometimes people try to stray away from saying statements like that, in an attempt to be hopeful or avoid negativity. But it is true. Porn took my childhood away from me. And that is sad. And I am hopeful. I am married to the love of my life, 10 years clean from self harm, 5 years sober from porn. And I am hopeful. I am hopeful that porn will become restricted, that age verification will be a requirement, that the upcoming generation, my future children will grow up with adults who chose to protect them. There is no place for children within the porn industry. If these sites had age verification my life would look extremely different and I would not have endured the pain and struggle that I experienced. I should have never had the access that I did to porn, and I am telling you today that age verification is an utter most necessity to protecting children and preventing stories like mine. Porn preys on the minds of children and young people with no attempt to protect them, but rather make profit despite their innocence. Political party & religious beliefs aside, porn is not for children. This is an area we can truly be unified in as a people. If we are continuing to categorize porn as "adult content" then it needs to be separated as such, and access should not be a click away. I am writing this urging you to stand on the right side of history, closing to fight for age verification on porn sites. For my younger self and the children of the upcoming generation, age verification is a necessity.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1839</b>		DATE: <b>2/10/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SARAH ELIZABETH THOMPSON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2026 2:44 PM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I'd like to send in my support of HB1839. As a concerned mother, I am testifying today in strong support of this bill to prohibit minors' access to highly sexual content online. I have children of my own, and like so many parents, I worry deeply about the direction our society is heading—one where explicit, often violent pornography is just a few clicks or accidental swipes away for kids who are far too young to process it.

Recent research shows that children are encountering online pornography at alarmingly young ages. According to a 2023 national survey by Common Sense Media—a respected nonprofit focused on children and media—among U.S. teens aged 13–17 who had viewed online pornography, the average age of first exposure was 12 years old. More than half (54%) reported seeing it by age 13, and 15% said they first saw it at age 10 or younger. Many of these encounters—around 58% in related data—are unintentional, happening through pop-ups, social media algorithms, or school-issued devices. This isn't just an American issue. In the UK, reports from the Children's Commissioner have found the average first exposure age is around 13, with 10% seeing it by age 9 and 27% by age 11. Similar patterns appear in Australian studies, where the average is about 13.2 years for boys and slightly higher for girls among those exposed.

These aren't abstract numbers—they represent real children, including potentially my own kids or yours, stumbling into content that depicts aggression, degradation, lack of consent, or extreme acts. Studies link early exposure to serious harms: increased anxiety, depression, distorted views of healthy relationships and sex, risky sexual behaviors, objectification of others, and even higher risks of acting out sexually or experiencing trauma-like symptoms. One analysis describes parallels between underage pornography consumption and post-traumatic effects similar to child sexual abuse, disrupting emotional and sexual development at a vulnerable stage.

As a mom, I can't sit by while society normalizes this unchecked access. Platforms and algorithms push or fail to block this material, often on mainstream apps like social media, where kids spend so much time. Parents try to monitor and talk openly, but we need stronger safeguards—age verification, default protections, and real accountability for companies—so children aren't exposed before they're ready.

This bill is a necessary step to protect our kids' innocence, mental health, and future relationships. I urge you to pass it. Our children deserve a safer online world, and we as adults have a responsibility to make that happen. Thank you for your time and for considering this critical protection.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SJ EVANS</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>402-699-4330</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>EXODUS CRY</b>		TITLE: <b>OUTREACH MANAGER</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>1607 SW NEW ORLEANS AVE</b>			
CITY: <b>LEES SUMMIT</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>64081</b>
EMAIL: <b>StephanieEvans@ExodusCry.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/7/2026 12:57 PM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

My name is SJ Evans.

As the outreach manager for Exodus Cry, an international anti trafficking organization, I have worked for over a decade with victims of sex trafficking. Time and time again I encounter the undeniable connection between porn and sex trafficking: porn fuels the demand for sexual encounters with trafficked women and children. I've seen this both in Missouri and world-wide.

I've also personally met too many people to count, survivors included, who were really harmed by childhood exposure to porn. This exposure was often accidental. This bill could help change that.

At no other time in human history has pornography:  
 Been so accessible to children and youth  
 Been so graphic and violent.

It is impossible for me to testify on the accessibility of pornography for children without talking about what modern online pornography is, and –heads up–it's not the porn that Hugh Hefner introduced to the generations past.

**Porn is Violent**

A recent study showed that 45% of videos on Pornhub (which is one of the most popular online porn sites,) and 35% of scenes on XVideos included at least one act of physical aggression. On average, men inflict the violence 75% of the time while women are the victims of this violence 97% of the time. The most commonly used forms of aggression are:

- Gagging
- Slapping
- choking.

A simple Google search for “abuse porn,” shows over 61K videos on Pornhub under the title “18andabused.” Another popular website, RapeLust. com, advertises that you can (and I quote) “Watch sexual abuse rape porn now in HD. See the best sexual abuse sex videos for free. Your best free forced porn video website.”

Violent porn promotes the belief that acts of violence—sometimes criminal acts— should actually be enjoyed during sex. And these types of videos are not anomalies in modern pornography; they are the

norm.

Pornography—especially today’s porn—should never be anyone’s sex ed.

**Porn promotes incest**

Another study showed that over 50% of the content on pornhub’s homepage was incest-themed. One of the most popular channels on Pornhub is called “My Perv Family.” It has over 691.4 million views (of their 500+ videos.)

In short, porn is teaching our kids that incest is not only OK, it should be welcomed. Any Sexual Abuse Nurse Examiner can testify to the fact that porn has greatly increased the amount of child-on-child sexual violence.

As a Missouri mom with two kids, one of whom was adopted, I don’t have adequate words to tell you how deeply troubling this reality is. The idea that my son, in just a few seconds, could accidentally stumble upon something that would tell him it’s OK to look at his little sister as a sexual object is mortifying!

**Porn Records Rape & Human Trafficking**

It is important to note that modern porn sites are also often a crime scene for human trafficking.

There are current and ongoing lawsuits against Pornhub for this very thing. One lawsuit even alleges that Pornhub’s parent company—Mind Geek—profited off of C-SAM by profit-sharing with sex traffickers.

Jane Doe #1 from this lawsuit was drugged, raped, and filmed. Those videos were posted by her sex trafficker onto Pornhub when she was only 16.

Jane Doe #2 of the same lawsuit says she was forced to participate in sexually explicit videos with adults at the age of 14 - these videos of her child rape were uploaded to pornhub and remained on the website for at least 4 years.

**Age Verification is the Simple Solution**

As a mother, I know that the big bad predator I should be aware of is no longer the stranger in a van offering kids candy. It’s a screen. Porn is the great sexual predator of our generation. It is using our children for clicks and making billions off of hurting them.

Age verification requires minimal time and minimal information. It does not violate an adult’s constitutional right. It simply protects the eyes of children from what we know is harmful to them. If you must be 21 to buy alcohol, and 18 to buy cigarettes, then surely we can all agree that the same age verification laws that exist in the physical world should be applied online.

Today I represent over 100 anti trafficking organizations and children protection groups who signed on in support of Exodus Cry’s Protect Children, Not Porn campaign. This campaign received 100,000 signatures. We are imploring Missouri to pass this age verification bill HB1839. Let Missouri be the state that tips the scale and shows the rest of the country, yea, the globe, that protecting children comes first!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1839</b>		DATE: <b>2/10/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>TAYLOR MUTHOKA</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2026 12:41 PM</b>	

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

I was only seven years old the first time I was exposed to pornography. My friend came over for a sleepover and wanted to show me what she had accidentally found on her device. All we needed to watch this content was to check a box claiming we were eighteen, and within seconds, I was dragged into a world I was far too young to see or understand.

But what I saw was not just explicit images. It was violent. It was abusive. It was filled with racism, homophobia, and the normalization of cruelty. Things children do not have the emotional or cognitive ability to process. I was just a little girl who cared about school, birthday parties, and ice cream. But my mind was so engrossed with the content I had been watching, I no longer cared about the things I did before. When I got older, I didn't know what healthy relationships and safe sex were supposed to look like. When boys objectified me, and touched me inappropriately, I let them. Because that's what porn taught me.

This is not just my story though. It is the story of countless children who are growing up in an internet age with unrestricted access to pornography.

And that is why I writing today urging the state of Missouri to pass House Bill 1839. Twenty-four states have already recognized this as a problem. It's time for Missouri to see it as well.

Checking a box that says "I'm 18" is meaningless and expecting parents or guardians to fully protect children in an internet-saturated world is unrealistic. Kids have access to phones, tablets, and computers everywhere. Placing the burden solely on families while the porn industry profits from their exposure is negligence.

If you care about protecting Missouri's children, then do not choose passivity. Thank you.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>TIMOTHY FABER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2026 2:40 PM</b>

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

Good Morning, and thank you for allowing me to speak with you this morning in favor of HB1839; HB2921; and 3015.

22 States (AZ, AR, FL, GA, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, MS, MT, NE, NC, ND, OK, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA and WY) have already passed laws similar to these bills requiring age verification for access to online pornography . . . four of them just within this past year. This is because these states recognize a very real and vital interest in protecting their children.

Missouri attempted to pass this last year, in fact this committee voted 16-0 to “do pass” – and for that I thank you. However, the bill never got a vote on the floor of the House. Hopefully we can get it done this year!

Former AG Andrew Bailey established 15CSR 60-18 which would accomplish the same thing – except that rules do not carry the weight of legislation that is passed by the people’s elected representatives. Additionally, it is still listed as a “proposed” rule, not one that has been established, making this legislation even more critical.

Missouri also protects our children in many ways. There are age verifications and restrictions for alcohol, tobacco and vaping products, marijuana, gambling, . . . a minor cannot get a tattoo until they are 18 unless they have parental consent, nor can a person under 18 get married. Hopefully no one would think it is okay for a minor to view pornography but not get married.

RSMo chapter 573.020 and 573.040 already make it a crime to show pornographic material to a minor, or to hand them pornographic material. So if you or I were to hand printed copy of Playboy to a minor we would be guilty of a crime. If we showed a pornographic movie or pictures to a classroom full of kids we would certainly be arrested. The problem before us to today is that these pornographic websites are skirting the law by claiming they are not “providing” their materials to minors per se; but rather are putting them on the internet for adult purposes. The problem is, there is nothing to prevent a minor from accessing them.

So, one issue before us is whether such material is being “provided”, “promoted”, or “furnished to minors”; or whether it is merely readily accessible, and whether that is a problem. I believe it is a problem. Though a person may not “provide or furnish” marijuana or alcohol to a child, we expect them to block access of it from the kids. We must develop a way to block access to minors, not merely refrain from providing it.

The second issue here is whether such a restriction and age verifications are overly burdensome to the presumed free speech rights of commercial entities. Perhaps we could debate the very clear free speech rights of individuals compared to the less clear free speech rights of commercial entities. But we should save that for another day.

But along the lines of this being an undue burden on these enterprises, we have not found any of the above restrictions or age verifications to be an undue burden on any of those other products or

services, so why would they be an undue burden in this case?

For those who would argue that age verification tools are not as useful as some claim, that they can be manipulated or over-ridden . . . I don't know, I am not a tech guru. But this I do know A) if they are secure enough when the proponents of sports betting were trying to get that to pass, they should be secure enough for this; and B) Even if not the best means of restricting access for minors, it is definitely a step in the right direction. If we find that it is faulty, or insufficient in some way, way can fix it later, but we cannot leave the door wide open to causing harm for our children now. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of HB236.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2026 11:11 PM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

**I am Opposed to this Bill. These Provisions Violate the First-Amendment of the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Missouri. This responsibility shall be placed on all Parents and Legal Guardians of Our State to monitor and ensure that their children stay off of Adult Websites.**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KORTNIE HUDDLESTON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2026 11:11 PM</b>	

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

I raise concerns about privacy, censorship, and the stigmatization of sexual health. While protecting children online is a shared goal, this legislation employs a dangerous and ineffective approach.

The bill mandates extensive data collection through age verification, requiring users to submit sensitive digital identification or transactional data. This creates a significant privacy risk, establishing databases of personal information linked to adult website visits. Such databases are prime targets for breaches, exposing individuals to blackmail, discrimination, and identity theft. The prohibition on data retention is insufficient and unenforceable, failing to provide real protection.

The required warning labels are not based on comprehensive public health consensus. They promote a singular, stigmatizing view of sexuality, ignoring the diversity of human experience and the potential for ethical adult content. This state-mandated messaging undermines bodily autonomy and perpetuates shame, which is harmful to public health and LGBTQ+ communities in particular.

Furthermore, the bill's vague definition of "sexual material harmful to minors" invites overbroad interpretation and censorship. It could be used to target websites providing crucial sexual education, LGBTQ+ resources, or artistic expression, chilling free speech. The exceptions for news organizations are narrow and subjective, offering little protection for other vital informational content.

This model also places an undue burden on smaller platforms and creators, while empowering large commercial age-verification contractors. It does nothing to address the core issue of young people's access to technology, instead pushing for invasive surveillance that will ultimately fail while eroding the privacy rights of all adults.

We should pursue actual solutions that focus on comprehensive digital literacy education, empowered parental controls, and investment in social services—not surveillance and censorship that jeopardizes fundamental rights. I urge you to reject this bill.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>MICHAEL DREYER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2026 11:06 PM</b>

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

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The bill mandates extensive data collection through age verification, requiring users to submit sensitive digital identification or transactional data. This creates a significant privacy risk, establishing databases of personal information linked to adult website visits. Such databases are prime targets for breaches, exposing individuals to blackmail, discrimination, and identity theft. The prohibition on data retention is insufficient and unenforceable, failing to provide real protection.

The required warning labels are not based on comprehensive public health consensus. They promote a singular, stigmatizing view of sexuality, ignoring the diversity of human experience and the potential for ethical adult content. This state-mandated messaging undermines bodily autonomy and perpetuates shame, which is harmful to public health and LGBTQ+ communities in particular.

Furthermore, the bill's vague definition of "sexual material harmful to minors" invites overbroad interpretation and censorship. It could be used to target websites providing crucial sexual education, LGBTQ+ resources, or artistic expression, chilling free speech. The exceptions for news organizations are narrow and subjective, offering little protection for other vital informational content.

This model also places an undue burden on smaller platforms and creators, while empowering large commercial age-verification contractors. It does nothing to address the core issue of young people's access to technology, instead pushing for invasive surveillance that will ultimately fail while eroding the privacy rights of all adults.

We should pursue actual solutions that focus on comprehensive digital literacy education, empowered parental controls, and investment in social services—not surveillance and censorship that jeopardizes fundamental rights. I urge you to reject this bill.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1839</b>		DATE: <b>2/10/2026</b>
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>		
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>SAGE CORAM</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: <b>AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF MISSOURI</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>	STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63101</b>
EMAIL: <b>scoram@aclu-mo.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2026 11:14 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

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COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SARAH BERRY</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/6/2026 1:39 PM</b>	

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

House Bill 1839 is unconstitutional, unworkable, and legally reckless.

It should not advance.

This bill does not merely attempt to protect minors.

It compels speech, mandates surveillance-adjacent identification practices, and imposes viewpoint-based regulation on lawful expression, all while ignoring settled U.S. Supreme Court precedent.

**1. HB 1839 Violates the First Amendment by Compelling Speech**

HB 1839 requires private websites to display state-mandated ideological messaging asserting disputed medical and psychological claims about pornography, addiction, and mental illness.

This is compelled speech, not consumer disclosure.  
 — and compelled speech is presumptively unconstitutional.

The government cannot force private actors to publish the state’s moral, political, or scientific opinions as a condition of operating a lawful website.

This applies EVEN when the legislature believes the message is beneficial.

Courts have repeatedly rejected laws that force private speakers to carry government-scripted warnings unrelated to a commercial transaction.

**2. The Bill Is a Content-Based Regulation Subject to Strict Scrutiny**

HB 1839 singles out websites based on content, not conduct:  
 “More than one-third sexual material”

Subjective definitions based on “community standards”

Vague thresholds with no measurable enforcement criteria

This triggers strict scrutiny, the highest constitutional standard.

To survive strict scrutiny, the state must show:

A compelling governmental interest  
Narrow tailoring  
The least restrictive means

HB 1839 fails all three.

Less restrictive alternatives already exist:  
Device-level parental controls  
Browser-based filters  
ISP-level filtering  
Voluntary age-gating tools

The Supreme Court has explicitly ruled that government cannot impose broad age-verification schemes on adult content when less restrictive alternatives exist.

### 3. Age Verification Requirements Chill Lawful Adult Speech

This bill does not merely restrict minors — it burdens adults' access to lawful speech by requiring:  
Digital identification  
Government-issued ID submission  
Reliance on transactional data (including education and employment records)

Even if information is “not retained,” the risk of exposure alone chills speech, especially for:  
Survivors of abuse  
LGBTQ+ individuals  
Journalists, researchers, and educators  
Individuals in hostile households

Courts do not require proof of retention to find constitutional harm — forced identification itself is the injury.

### 4. The Bill Is Unconstitutionally Vague and Overbroad

Key terms are undefined or unworkable:  
“More than one-third” of content (by page count? bandwidth? impressions?)  
“Transactional data” (sweeping inclusion of mortgage, education, and employment records)  
“Commercially reasonable” verification methods

Vague statutes invite arbitrary enforcement, especially when paired with:  
\$10,000 per day penalties  
\$250,000 enhancements if a minor accesses content  
Broad Attorney General discretion

This is precisely the type of statute courts strike down for due process violations.

### 5. HB 1839 Creates Massive State Litigation Exposure

Every enforcement action under this bill invites:  
Facial First Amendment challenges  
As-applied challenges  
Prior restraint claims  
Injunctions halting enforcement  
Attorney's fee awards against the state

The Attorney General will not be “protecting children” — the AG will be defending an indefensible statute in federal court.

Taxpayers will pay for:  
Defending unconstitutional enforcement

**Settlements**  
**Court-ordered attorney's fees**

**This bill practically begs for a federal injunction.**

#### **6. The "News Organization" Exception Proves the Constitutional Problem**

**HB 1839 explicitly exempts news-gathering organizations.**

**That exemption:**  
**Confirms this is content-based regulation**  
**Demonstrates viewpoint favoritism**  
**Undermines any claim of neutral application**

**If the concern were truly technological or access-based, such carveouts would be unnecessary.**

#### **7. This Bill Conflicts with Binding Supreme Court Precedent**

**Nearly identical age-verification laws have been repeatedly invalidated.**

**Legislating in open defiance of settled constitutional law is not policymaking — it is negligence.**

#### **CONCLUSION**

**HB 1839:**

**Compels ideological speech**

**Burdens lawful adult expression**

**Imposes unconstitutional age-verification mandates**

**Is vague, overbroad, and unenforceable**

**Exposes the State of Missouri to immediate federal litigation**

**Protecting minors does not require violating the Constitution.**

**This bill should be voted down before it becomes another expensive, embarrassing court loss for the State of Missouri.**

#### **CONSTITUTIONAL & LEGAL FOOTNOTES**

**<sup>1</sup> U.S. Constitution, Amendment I**

**Prohibits laws abridging freedom of speech or compelling speech.**

**<sup>2</sup> Missouri Constitution, Article I, Sections 2 & 8**

**Guarantee free speech and due process.**

**<sup>3</sup> Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Ass'n, 564 U.S. 786 (2011)**

**Struck down content-based restrictions on sexually explicit material.**

**<sup>4</sup> Ashcroft v. ACLU, 542 U.S. 656 (2004)**

**Held that mandatory age-verification schemes for adult content violate the First Amendment when less restrictive alternatives exist.**

**<sup>5</sup> Reno v. ACLU, 521 U.S. 844 (1997)**

**Invalidated vague and overbroad internet content restrictions.**

**<sup>6</sup> Wooley v. Maynard, 430 U.S. 705 (1977)**

**Government may not compel individuals to display ideological messages.**

**<sup>7</sup> FCC v. Fox Television Stations, Inc., 567 U.S. 239 (2012)**

**Vague standards violate due process.**

**<sup>8</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 1983**

**Provides civil liability and attorney's fees for constitutional violations.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ABIGAIL HERNDON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
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**Why are there 3 bills covering the same topic with minimal differences in the bill text? Wouldn't one suffice and be less of a financial burden on tax paying constituents?**