



Age Verification Bill is Defeated

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” Proverbs 4:23

The defeat of [HB1257](#) was a huge disappointment for CWA of South Dakota State Director Linda Schauer and Legislative Liaison Lisa Gennaro. The bill would have been a positive and effective step in protecting children from internet obscenity. Because this good bill had passed in the House [62-6](#), we were very frustrated to see it fail in the Senate Judiciary Committee, where Sen. Michael Rohl (R-District 1) made a motion to send it to the 41st legislative day (thus killing the bill). It was downhill from there, going through a smoke out, several amendments, and five conference committees before it met its [demise](#). We wanted a No vote. Our opponents claimed our state would be sued by the ACLU and, therefore, wanted to do a “summer study” on the issue.

In 2017, the South Dakota Legislature passed resolution [SCR4](#) that declared pornography a public health crisis, acknowledging that “young children are exposed to pornography at an alarming rate” and “pornography normalizes violence against and abuse of women and children.” The resolution acknowledged the need for “education, prevention, research, and policy change.”

Children are able to access the most extreme pornography by simply answering “yes” to the question, “Are you 18?” Age verification bills like HB1257 would have protected minors from accessing pornographic sites.

One [study](#) revealed that about half of teens assumed that online porn is an accurate depiction of sex and wanted to imitate those behaviors. Today’s pornography is not your grandfather’s porn like Playboy. Rather, it is nudity, verbal abuse, and sexual acts such as raping, choking, pain, or slapping. Porn thrives on the idea that women enjoy violence. Sadly, the viewer confuses sex with a

meaningful, truly loving, committed, and faithful marriage.

Exposure of children to internet pornography is harming their development. The images they see are imbedded in the brain. Porn produces chemical changes in the brain that can make it addictive—like a drug. As more pornography is viewed, the brain’s grey matter is reduced, and the brain is chemically and biologically altered, especially for growing and developing children. This often leads to sexual aggression, anxiety, and depression.

Children under the age of ten account for 22% of online porn viewers. While 10 to 14-year-olds make up 36% of minors’ consumption, the average age they start is 12, and many began younger, according to Bitdefender in 2016. Almost half of teens who watch porn do so during school on school-owned devices. In Senate Judiciary Committee testimony, a South Dakota school bus driver related that a boy on his bus had porn on his device, and the kids fought to sit by him. We heard another troubling story of a seven-year-old son who stayed overnight at a friend’s house. After the parents had retired for the night, the boys got on the computer and watched porn.

What is being done to curb this national health crisis? So far, nine states have passed bills similar to our South Dakota HB1257. Since Louisiana passed an age verification bill in 2022, the state’s Pornhub online traffic dropped 80%. Just recently, in a victory for Texas, the Fifth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that age verification requirements are constitutional.

The silver lining in bringing this issue to the forefront is that people are becoming aware that this is a problem.

Sen. Red Dawn Foster (D-District 27) of Pine Ridge was a sponsor of HB1257. She reports witnessing awareness by the parents and elders of the tribes who are seeking ways to protect their children from this scourge.

For more information on this issue go to:

- [endsexualexploitation.org/issues/pornography//](https://endsexualexploitation.org/issues/pornography/)
- focusonthefamily.com/parenting/help-my-kid-was-exposed-to-pornography/

Points from Pierre

“Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” Ephesians 6:13

The 2024 South Dakota Legislative Session began on January 9 and ended on Veto Day, March 25. Linda and Lisa represented your interests throughout the 38-day session. Each bill considered was aligned with one of CWA’s core issues: sanctity of life, education, religious liberty, sexual exploitation, defense of family, national sovereignty, and support for Israel. All bills, actions, and legislative information can be accessed at sdlegislature.gov. If you have any questions, feel free to phone Linda at (605) 380-6914.

Sanctity of Life

[HCR6008](#) was a good resolution expressing the Legislature’s opposition to the initiated measure being circulated to put unfettered abortion in our South Dakota Constitution. All pro-lifers should [read through the resolution and even print it out](#) so they can explain to others how bad this initiated measure is should it get on the ballot. HCR6008 passed along party lines in both chambers.

PRAY that “Dakotans for Health” will not get the required 35,017 valid signatures to qualify for the November ballot and that South Dakota will remain a pro-life state.

[HB1244](#) was a good bill that provided a process to withdraw a signature from a petition for an initiated measure, constitutional amendment, or a referendum on a law in certain situations. People have been deceived into signing the abortion petition and are seeking a way to remove their names from it. HB1244 was amended, narrowing the window for persons to withdraw their names. It passed in the House [60-10](#) and in the Senate [28-5](#). **If you have been deceived and signed this abortion petition mistakenly, [click here to read how you can remove your name from the petition.](#)**

video explaining our state’s [abortion law](#) that bans abortion. HB1224 will clarify the current law, as some in the medical field are questioning what is legal and what is not regarding what constitutes or what does not constitute an abortion. HB1224 passed mostly along party lines.

Education

[SB72](#) is a good bill that increases the annual limit of tax credits that an insurance company may claim through the [Partners in Education](#) (PIE) tax credit program. This program began in 2014 and has periodically increased the limit of tax credits available, providing scholarships to more low-income families with a choice in education for their children for private or religious education. SB72 raises the available dollars from \$350 million in 2023 to \$5 million. SB72 passed in the Senate with a vote of [25-7-2](#) and in the House [56-13](#).

[HB1072](#), brought by the South Dakota Education Association, would have required those serving on the Board of Standards to be qualified professionals and have experience in the education field. Department of Education Secretary Dr. Joe Graves was the only opponent of HB1072. I highly recommend listening to [Dr. Graves’s excellent testimony](#) (1:16:15). This bill failed in committee. Some nuggets from Dr. Graves’s testimony:

- Public schools have lost some of the public trust, as evidenced by the [growth](#) of homeschooled students.
- Parents are concerned about revisionist history and inappropriate content in library books.
- Recent actions have shown parents that they are not welcome. Law enforcement has been present at school board meetings.
- National School Board Association treats parents as terrorists.
- This bill is the education establishment’s reaction to recent South Dakota Social Studies Standards.

[HB1197](#) will require public schools to have filters to block obscene materials on their computers and also a policy to restrict minors from accessing obscene matter or materials in the public library. This good bill was passed unanimously in the House and the Senate.

Sexual Exploitation

[SB79](#) will revise and define provisions related to the possession, distribution, and manufacture of child pornography. With the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), child pornography is being computer generated, but real children are being victimized. SB79 provides tougher mandatory minimum sentences. This bill passed almost unanimously.

[HB1178](#) will prohibit the Board of Regents or any institution under its control from using state resources (i.e., state universities) for obscene live conduct. The bill defines “obscene live conduct” in our [Codified Law](#). The Board of Regents has been controlling this use of state resources. HB1178 clarifies and strengthens their efforts. Check the votes [here](#).

National Sovereignty

[HCR6001](#) was a good resolution supporting our Electoral College as opposed to the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. It passed overwhelmingly.

[SJR508](#) and [SJR509](#) – These resolutions come every year and are always defeated. They are applications to Congress for a Constitutional Convention (aka Convention of States). If our country ever held such a convention, it would open up our U.S. Constitution for changes. The globalists would welcome this opportunity to destroy our country. The problem with our government is not the Constitution; the problem is lawmakers at all levels who do not obey it. Supporters of Convention of States would do more good urging lawmakers to adhere to the Constitution rather than trying to change it. We were pleased the resolutions failed in committee.

[HB1140](#) – This bad bill had a long history of amendments and conference committees ending on the last day of the session. It would have been a threat to our right of local control for elections. Apparently, when the news came out that citizens were introducing an initiative to do a hand count of ballots in their county, legislative leadership made an attempt to stop that constitutional right. The bill was defeated [35-35](#). We wanted a no vote.

Support for Israel

[HCR6004](#) – We were pleased to support this resolution, affirming the Legislature’s support of and commitment to the State of Israel. “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Genesis 12:3



Primaries are Important! **Mark Your Calendar!** Exercise Your Right to Vote!

2024 Primary Election - June 4, 2024

Voter Registration Deadline - May 20, 2024 Absentee voting begins - April 19, 2024

Abortion Drug Puts Women at Risk

“For You created my inmost being ...” Psalm 139:13

The U.S. Supreme Court recently heard arguments for the *U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) v. Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine* case over the use and distribution of Mifepristone, the dangerous chemical abortion drug used to commit 60% of abortions. Plaintiffs in this case, the Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine et al., oppose removal of the drug’s safety precautions.

The FDA’s decision to rush approval of this drug by

lowering standards of care puts women at risk. In 2021, the FDA violated federal law by approving mail-order Mifepristone. Lacking medical oversight, do-it-yourself abortions are dangerous.

CWA submitted an *amicus brief* asking the Court to affirm the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit’s decision that the FDA acted unlawfully by removing those original safety standards.

Porn and Predators: How to Teach Children Internet Safety

“I will set before my eyes no vile thing.” Psalm 101:3

CWA National reports that the last time any meaningful federal legislation safeguarding children online passed was in 1998, just as Google was founded and six years before the advent of Facebook. This 1998 Children’s Online Privacy Protection Rule (COPPA) could not foretell what protections would be necessary for the behemoth that the internet and social media would become in such a short period of time. However, the behemoth has indeed manifested, ravaging our children in its wake.

A recent [survey](#) found that teens spend eight hours and 39 minutes a day on screens while tweens spend five hours and 44 minutes a day on screens. This becomes even more disconcerting knowing that the average teen in America sleeps only around [7 hours](#) a night!

Another [survey](#) found that teens spend only around 20 minutes a day video chatting with friends while they spent multiple hours watching videos. The algorithms implemented in today’s multitude of platforms can result in youth stumbling upon extremely harmful content, like pornography, violence, threats, etc.

Though this phenomenon causes untold consternation for parents, there are some basic principles and avenues of action that both parents and their youth can work on together. As a parent, you will certainly have your own rules for your children as well. And engagement with your youth is the best tip yet!

A Few Tips for Parents to Teach Children Internet Safety:

Your minor children should:

- Only have devices/computers in an open room, not a bedroom.
- Only use devices with a porn filter.
- Only install a new app if it is approved by a parent.
- Report to a parent any sexually suggestive/violent/threatening/intimidating/harmful materials.
- Report to a parent if anyone requests or sends suggestive, explicit pictures or videos (“sexting”).
- Be reminded to “think before you post” because there are “no take-backs.”
- Be reminded not to “accept” any invitation or activity that appears sexually suggestive/violent/threatening/intimidating/obscene/harmful.
- Be reminded that their parents will not shame or embarrass them if immoral content comes up on their device, even if the teen brought it on him/herself.
- Have devices shut down automatically at a specified time each night and turn on in the morning.
- Have their parents monitor their social media presence as often as possible if that activity is allowed by their parents.

Our Attorney General (AG) has [Consumer Protection](#) information you can access, e.g., “20 Apps Parents Should Know.” The AG’s office staff are there to help you and your family. You can report harmful activity by calling (605)773-4400 or by emailing consumerhelp@state.sd.us. You, along with your children, can be a watchdog to prevent harm to families everywhere.

Sources:

1. [“Children Deserve Online Protection,” By Valerie Bynog March 11, 2024](#)
2. [“Protecting Our Kids Online Must Be A Top Priority,” By Valerie Bynog, May 22, 2023](#)
3. [“Teach Your Child Device Safety and Use”](#)
4. [SD Attorney General Consumer Protection Division](#)

CWA Membership State & National: A donation of \$25 or more has TWO benefits: membership in CWA of South Dakota and membership in CWA national. All donations given to CWA of South Dakota remain in South Dakota for state projects. Write your check out to “Concerned Women for America,” put “CWA of SD” on the memo line, and send in the envelope provided. Or, give online at sd.cwfa.org. Your renewed annual membership/additional donation is greatly appreciated. All donations sent to CWA national in response to their mailings are utilized in Washington, D.C. All contributions are tax-deductible.