



Device Filter Bill

H4535 - Bennett

**Protecting children from harmful images online;
requiring manufacturers to default filters to "ON" rather than "OFF"**

Problem:

Adolescent and preteen children are consuming hard core pornography with unfiltered internet accessible devices. Pornography is a highly addictive agent and children are especially vulnerable; for many, it serves as their sex education.

A nationally representative survey found that **64% of young people, ages 13–24, actively seek out pornography weekly or more often.**

Porn consumption continues to be an issue as the Navigators Christian Ministry at Clemson University reports most men and 25%-30% of women students in Navigators struggle with pornography addiction.

Solution:

Virtually all internet accessible devices are manufactured with built in filtering capabilities and parental control features, but the filters are defaulted to "OFF."

This legislation mandates that the devices be manufactured so that filters default to "ON" when activated in South Carolina.

Analysis found that children who disclosed exposure to pornography were at 3.3 times greater likelihood of engaging in problem sexualized behavior (PSB) compared to those who did not disclose pornography exposure.

Without this legislation it is not possible for parents to effectively protect their children from the massive amounts of harmful material inundating them online.
~ National Center on Sexual Exploitation

Reasoning:

Why Filters?

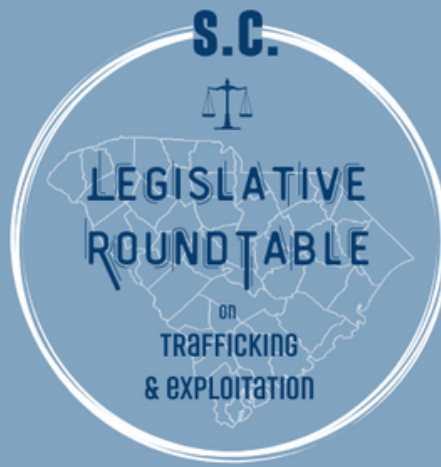
- Devices are currently manufactured with filters built in but defaulted to "OFF."
- Parents / guardians find turning the filters "ON" to be very burdensome; default "ON" rather than default "OFF" addresses this.
- With the "ON" default, parents / guardians may control access to speech harmful to children.
- Placing filters on the device itself, instead of on the network, protects minors on the internet wherever the device is used.

Free Speech?

- This legislation does not restrict adult access to speech as it filters speech at the device-level rather than universally restricting the source internet.
- Adults may elect to consume pornography by deactivating the filters on the device with a passcode.
- This legislation allows the state to mandate the use of filters while empowering parents to determine what material is appropriate for their children.

A step...

- This legislation is a necessary incremental step in advancing South Carolina's legitimate interest to protect our children from harmful online materials without restricting adult access to protected speech.
- Parents, guardians, and the S.C. Attorney General will be able to bring civil actions against: adults who deactivate filters on devices used by minors and manufacturers of devices that do not comply with the law.



Contact us:
Brooke Burris, Esq., Director
bburris@legislativeroundtable.org

Bob Healy, Servant / Director
rhealy@legislativeroundtable.org

Roundtable Members



Fresh Start, Healing Heart



The S.C. Legislative Roundtable on Trafficking and Exploitation is a South Carolina Association of non-profits combatting human trafficking and exploitation.