

Utah Declares Jezebelic Public Health Crisis—and It's Not HIV

The Utah State Senate has unanimously voted to declare pornography a public health crisis.

State Sen. Todd Weiler was a major supporter of the resolution, contending that pornography's increased accessibility has damaged the nation.

The National Center on Sexual Exploitation applauded the historic decision, stating that pornography harms individuals' minds and bodies, as well as their ability to sustain lasting and meaningful relationships.

"The research is clear: Pornography is significantly linked to decreased brain matter in regions of motivation and decision-making and to increasing cases of sexual dysfunction," Dawn Hawkins, executive director of the National Center on Sexual Exploitation said.

"Beyond the negative impact pornography can have on one's physical health, it is also associated with alarming social ills like increases in sexual violence and increased beliefs that women enjoy rape," she added.

"Pornography is clearly a poison that any society striving for ideals of personal well-being, equality, and respect cannot tolerate," she said.

Weiler also cited a recent study from the United Kingdom that found that people who regularly view pornography show the same brain activity as someone addicted to drugs.

The senator echoes the same warnings that organizations like Enough Is Enough (EIE) have given about the destructive

effects of porn.

EIE President Donna Rice Hughes said that Utah's landmark resolution "shows the courage and conviction of a legislative body to deal with unpopular and often misunderstood social justice issues such as pornography."

"Unfortunately, deviant and extreme pornography has become increasingly more mainstream due to few barriers of entry since 1994," Hughes added.

"Since that time, numerous peer-reviewed research studies continue to reveal that Internet pornography use is a fueling factor in the sexual exploitation of children, violence against women, sex trafficking, sexual and erectile dysfunction and physiological and chemical changes in the brain," she said.

Authorities are already seeing the devastating effects the flood of pornography has on a community. Too often the biggest victims are children.

A Prince George County elementary school volunteer was recently arrested for manufacturing, producing and possessing about 40 pornographic videos and images of students between the ages of 9 and 13. The elementary school volunteer was charged with 10 counts of sexual abuse of a minor and a second degree sexual offense.

Not only are children at risk of being victims, but they're also at risk for becoming consumers at a young age.

"New research, The Porn Phenomenon, conducted by Barna Group, reveals that a quarter of young adults are first exposed to pornography before puberty," Hawkins said. "This has dangerous social ramifications, because as pornography shapes the sexual templates of rising generations, violence and abuse of women and children becomes normalized."

“The government must recognize the science that confirms the harms of pornography, similarly to how it recognized the damage to public health caused by tobacco,” she said.

This case shows that pornography can do more than just affect the individual, but can lead the abuser to abuse others.

“A shared responsibility between the public, corporate America and government is necessary to curb the continuous flood of Internet pornography in our nation. Now that science backs up the reality of Internet in our nation, now that science backs up the reality of Internet pornography’s harm to children, adults and cultures, we are hopeful that other states will address this serious issue very soon,” Hughes said.