

Greetings,

My name is Katie Scarlett Calcutt. I am a resident of Topeka and a mother of 8 children. I am writing to testify in favor of SB 394 & HB 2592 to support protecting children, mine and others, from the harm of pornography on the internet. The benefit of this bill, if made law, is in providing recourse to families damaged by minors accessing porn and also provides a disincentive to entities looking to capitalize on the vulnerability of impressionable children.

Allow me to share a brief anecdote to underscore the importance of having legislation like this in place in the state of Kansas:

In January, I was browsing the Topeka Public Library website with my 9 year old son. On the top banner of the main site, a message promoting a new celebrity memoir displayed a cover photo: a topless woman covering her breasts with only her hands. We are usually pretty careful about what we put in front of our kids. They don't have their own devices or access to much electronic content and I thought I was safe showing a public library website to my son. He was visibly disturbed. I felt violated.

Thankfully, when I visited the library, staff was responsive. I was immediately offered access to the CEO, who explained that the image would be immediately taken down and apologized that this had happened to my son. I was not perfectly satisfied by this, but was grateful for the decisiveness.

I still wondered, how we'd become desensitized to a point where a content creator would consider this to be appropriate. If this misjudgment occurred on a public library website, I am scared to imagine how the savvy entertainment industry, and worse, the extremely profitable and inhumanly exploitive porn industry can find their way to the attention of my relatively sheltered son.

This law is about more than recourse, penalties and which entities may or may not qualify. This is about deciding our society should have a collective conscience to protect our children. Our kids look to see where we put up barriers - in the home, with our behavior, and with our laws. By insisting that these entities put measures in place, and promising to hold them accountable, we show our children we all care about what they are allowed to see. When I explain to my sons and daughters what potential harm they may encounter on the internet, I hope I can count on the State of Kansas to be an ally in that effort. I hope you all agree and vote accordingly.

Thank you.