



## Senator Julie Miville-Dechêne Introduces Bill to Protect Young People from Exposure to Pornography

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For immediate Release

OTTAWA, ON – Independent Senator Julie Miville-Dechêne will table a bill in the Senate later today to protect minors from exposure to online pornography. The bill will require commercial pornography sites to actually verify users' age before they enter the site. Failure to do so will be a criminal offence.

The *Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography Act* is needed because youth consumption of pornography is linked to a series of serious problems, such as addiction to pornography, the reinforcement of sexual stereotypes and the development of attitudes leading to harassment and violence – including sexual harassment and violence – toward women in particular.

Countries such as France have taken action and others like Australia are in the process of doing so in order to protect young people with free and unlimited access to porn sites that are increasingly extreme, sometimes violent and often degrading and demeaning to women. Some studies suggest that, on average, people are first exposed to pornography between the ages of 8 and 11 ([1](#), [2](#)). In Canada, 40% of high school youth reportedly view online pornography ([3](#)).

“This is a real and urgent public health and safety issue. It is unacceptable that lucrative porn sites make no effort to check whether their users are actually adults. Outside the Internet, there are laws to punish the distribution of pornographic material to minors. Why should it be different online, especially when there is highly advanced technology to verify age and protect users' personal information?” said Senator Miville-Dechêne and ex-president of the Quebec Council for the Status of Women.

“Something must be done, given that children are spending more and more time on the Internet, mostly on their cell phones. This makes it harder to install parental filters, which research has shown to be relatively ineffective in any case. Moreover, why should parents be left to handle this issue themselves when in many other areas of public health, merchants are asked to check the age of customers buying cigarettes and alcohol?” concluded the Senator.

Across Canada, many experts and parent groups are concerned about the effects of exposure to pornography on minors. Testimony to this effect was gathered during consultations conducted in preparation for the tabling of this bill.

“Adult pornography is not only harmful to a child’s developing brain, it is also used to groom children for sexual abuse and to normalize sexual activity. Governments have a responsibility to protect children and intervene when they are being harmed, just as we do in the offline world. Industry has a responsibility to ensure that the sexually explicit material that they are making publicly available – and profiting from – is not available to children.”

- Lianna McDonald, Executive Director, [Canadian Centre for Child Protection](#)

“Too young, too often, too intensively, exposure to pornography always causes a wound, but in some children, it can shatter their self-esteem and their relationship with others, and forever. In children's brains, exposure to pornography is an intrusion that disturbs, makes them anxious or gives them nightmares, worse, porn creates images, it creates a distortion of thought and expectations about the world, and it is then that submission and brutality become predictable and painfully legitimized.”

- Jean-François Chicoine, Pediatrician, Sainte-Justine University Hospital Centre

“As a society, we tend to imagine the porn industry as consensual entertainment catering to adults. But the reality is that children are landing on these sites where they find extreme, violent, and often illegal sexualized content. It is both dangerous and irresponsible of Canada not to implement age verification on pornographic websites when we have the technology to do so.”

- Marilyn Evans, Founder, [Parents Aware](#)

“The most dangerous thing about pornography is that it has become educational for minors, starting at the age of 10 or 12. In my practice, I am facing emerging and disastrous phenomena: a resurgence of domination, a dramatic increase in STBBIs, performance anxiety that generates pain on penetration and erectile dysfunction, an explosion of requests for cosmetic genital surgery; all linked to the influence of pornography. The bill can counterbalance this painful distortion of the sexual dimension and prevent access to content that is extremely traumatic for children.”

- Marie-Christine Pinel, Sex Therapist and Writer, Executive Director, [unisexeducation.com](#)

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