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Given at a Science, Technology, and Space Hearing:
The Science Behind Pornography Addiction
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The Testimony of
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Good afternoon, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am Judith Reisman, Ph.D., president of the Institute for Media Education, specializing in the communication effects of images on the brain, mind and memory; fraud in the human sexuality field; and the addictive properties of sexually explicit images, commonly called pornography.

Thanks to the latest advances in neuroscience, we now know that pornographic visual images imprint and alter the brain, triggering an instant, involuntary, but lasting, biochemical memory trail, arguably, subverting the First Amendment by overriding the cognitive speech process. This is true of so-called “soft-core” and “hard-core” pornography. And once new neurochemical pathways are established they are difficult or impossible to delete.

Pornographic images also cause secretion of the body’s “fight or flight” sex hormones. This triggers excitatory transmitters and produces non-rational, involuntary reactions; intense arousal states that overlap sexual lust--now with fear, shame, and/or hostility and violence. Media erotic fantasies become deeply imbedded, commonly coarsening, confusing, motivating and addicting many of those exposed. (See “the Violence Pyramid” at <http://www.vbii.org/violence.html>) Pornography triggers myriad kinds of internal, natural drugs that mimic the “high” from a street drug. Addiction to pornography is addiction to what I dub erototoxins -- mind-altering drugs produced by the viewer’s own brain.

How does this ‘brain sabotage’ occur? Brain scientists tell us that “in 3/10 of a second a visual image passes from the eye through the brain, and whether or not one wants to, the brain is structurally changed and memories are created – we literally ‘grow new brain’ with each visual experience.”

This scientifically documented neurochemical imprinting affects children and teens especially deeply; their still-developing brains process emotions differently, with significantly less rationality and cognition than the adult brain.

Children and others who cannot read will still instantly decode, feel and experience images. Largely right-hemisphere visual and non-speech stimuli enter long-term memory, conscious and unconscious. Any highly excitatory stimuli (whether sexually explicit sex education or X-Rated films) say neurologists, “which lasts half a second within five to ten minutes has produced a structural change that is in some ways as profound as the structural changes one sees in [brain] damage...[and] can...leave a trace that will last for years.”

Pornography psychopharmacologically imprints young brains – thereby invalidating notions of informed consent. Moreover, the mainstreaming of pornography since the 1950’s directly coincides with the unprecedented

explosion in sexual disease and a huge, exponential increase in new types of pornographic copycat sex crimes by and to juveniles and adults. Such facts should inform the legal arguments about free speech versus pornography in public and even private venues. I have spent decades documenting the effects of pornographic “humor” and photos on children, fathers, husbands and wives and communities, much of which is found in my book, "Soft" Porn Plays Hardball, 1990, in my U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

report, Images of Children, Crime and Violence in Playboy, Penthouse and Hustler, and in my white paper on “The Psychopharmacology of Pictorial Pornography: Restructuring Brain, Mind & Memory & Subverting Freedom of Speech” (<http://www.drjudithreisman.com/brain.pdf>).

A basic science research team employing a cautiously protective methodology should study erototoxins and the brain/body.

State-of-the-art brain scanning studies should answer these questions with hard, replicable data. As with the tobacco suits, these data could be helpful in litigation and in affecting legal change.

Testimony from victims and police commonly finds pornography an on site sex crime manual. In one 1984 Senate hearing, John Rabun, now COO of DoJ’s Missing and Abducted Children Center, testified that when arrested, “all, that is 100%” of rapists, pedophiles, etc., in their study possessed adult pornography, “such as Playboy, on up....”

An offensive strategy should be planned, mandating law enforcement collection of all pornography data at crime sites and judges, police, lawyers and law schools should receive training in the hard data of sexology fraud and erototoxins as changing brains absent informed consent.

Congress should end all Federal funding of educational institutions that train students with bogus Kinseyan academic pornography and/or that teach pornography as harmless. Congress should also remove the authority of so-called sexology institutes--most of whom are pornography grantees--to confer professional credentials and serve as expert witnesses.

These are concrete steps that can and must be taken to redress the effects of pornography on our children, our communities and our country.

Thank you very much.

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