

Petition to the Governor to end internet pornography

To: Mr. Timothy Kaine
Governor of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia, 23218

Dear Sir,

Virginia citizens continue to suffer a deluge of pornography. The two major sources are internet sites, and pornographic programs on cable television. This is not news to anyone, nor is it news to you that this is a violation of Virginia law, which prohibits pornography distribution by any medium. Virginia law prohibiting pornography is found in Title 18, Chapter 8, Sections 2-372 to 2-379, and is reproduced below.

18.2-372. "Obscene" defined.

The word "obscene" where it appears in this article shall mean that which, considered as a whole, has as its dominant theme or purpose an appeal to the prurient interest in sex, that is, a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, excretory functions or parts thereof or sadomasochistic abuse, and which goes substantially beyond customary limits of candor in description or representation of such matters and which, taken as a whole, does not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

18.2-373. Obscene items enumerated.

Obscene items shall include:

- (1) Any obscene book;
- (2) Any obscene leaflet, pamphlet, magazine, booklet, picture, painting, bumper sticker, drawing, photograph, film, negative, slide, motion picture, videotape recording;
- (3) Any obscene figure, object, article, instrument, novelty device, or recording or transcription used or intended to be used in disseminating any obscene song, ballad, words or sounds;
- (4) Any obscene writing, picture or similar visual representation, or sound recording, stored in an electronic or other medium retrievable in a perceivable form.

18.2-374. Production, publication, sale, possession, etc., of obscene items.

It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to:

- (1) Prepare any obscene item for the purposes of sale or distribution;
- (2) Print, copy, manufacture, produce, or reproduce any obscene item for purposes of sale or distribution;
- (3) Publish, sell, rent, lend, transport in intrastate commerce, or distribute or exhibit any obscene item. Possession in public or in a public place of any obscene item as defined in this article shall be deemed prima facie evidence of a violation of this section.

For the purposes of this section "distribute" shall mean delivery in person, by mail, messenger or by any other means by which obscene items as defined in this article may pass from one person, firm or corporation to another.

18.2-375. Obscene exhibitions and performances.

18.2-376. Advertising, etc., obscene items, exhibitions or performances.

18.2-377. Placards, posters, bills, etc.

18.2-378. Coercing acceptance of obscene articles or publications.

18.2-379. Employing or permitting minor to assist in offense under article.

(18.2-375 through 18.2-379 are reproduced here in heading only.)

Reasoning behind the laws

Pornography does real damage to adults, children, marriages, jobs. These videos often find their way to children, where their shameful, amoral message of faceless, disposable people as sex objects is taught. It is to prevent harm to society and our children that Virginia has outlawed the distribution of pornography.

What we consent to forms and reinforces who we are...respect, patience, self control, make for people of decency. Pornography forms the next generation of child molesters; Violent video games cultivates gangs; immodest fashions incite sexual promiscuity. The moral reasoning of an individual is formed in part by the standards of his society. Following generations inherit the norm that we provide for them - sexuality as no longer a beautiful and precious gift, but something sold by the page, pound, or minute.

Virginia law does not exempt internet pornography filtered by a "safe search" option, nor does it allow pornography under a ".xxx" internet domain. Obscenity is not essential for the expression of an idea and is not protected by federal or state freedom of speech statutes. Internet, phone, and cable T.V. companies that fail to filter out pornography are illegally distributing pornography.
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Governor Kaine, you must immediately task the state attorney general with eradicating electronic distribution of pornography within our borders! The technology is available, you need only supply the will to do it. The attorney general should seek a judge's order that media distribution companies install and operate filtering technology within one year, with a large per day fine for not doing so. A citizens commission would be assembled to decide on questionable material.

The undersigned citizen(s) call on you to enforce existing state law prohibiting pornography, for the well being of our children and all our citizens. Please inform me of the steps you are taking.

Sincerely,