

OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF PHILLIP COSBY
AMERICAN FAMILY ACTION of KANSAS and MISSOURI, February 2018

OPPONENT: HB 2739 – Changing the requirements for juvenile offenders to register for sex offenses to match the requirement for adults

For fifteen years I have focused the issue of the harms of pornography and the hyper sexualized culture. I have interacted with parents, students, lawmakers, the courts, law enforcement, media, churches and clinicians to address a tsunami of harms.

Daily we wake to news of sexual assaults. K-12, university campuses, Hollywood celebrities, Olympic guardians, business leaders, pastors and entrusted public servants are a few of the fallen. The growing reality of child sexual assaults are real and mind numbing. Fifteen years ago, denial in most institutions was the norm. Denial has now given way to head shaking, anger or a numbing resignation as to what can be done?

Just two years ago this committee worked a bill to reduce, for minors, the felony penalty for “electronic transmission of sexual images” or “sexting” to a misdemeanor. The black hat approach of scaring kids straight with the heavy hammer of a felony charge was ineffective. Apparently even the reducing of a “sexting” charge to a misdemeanor seems to be difficult to execute. (Feb 2018 Topeka Seaman High School)

This bill is a “black hat” approach. No one will, nor should they label a child for a lifetime sentence of “registered sex offender”.

The fiscal note on HB 2739 reports no effect on the Judicial Branch or the Sentencing Commissions bed space. Is it possible they know that trials and over crowded juvenile detention facilities will never materialize? If asked, would first line law enforcement and county attorneys submit a different fiscal note as once again they will be tasked to pick up another oversized hammer and wear another ineffectual “black hat”.

What is the fiscal note for a child? A lifetime of opportunities that are forever denied.

Where is our outrage towards the adult online promoters of obscenity? The adult promoters of materials harmful to minors? The human traffickers that pass adolescents through sexually oriented businesses. Lets be the adults and pick on somebody our own size.

These damaged kids need remedies, not a lifetime Scarlet Letter tag.

A bruised boy is easier to mend than a broken man.

The Resolve of the **2017 Kansas House and 2018 Senate Resolutions on Pornography, A Public Health Crisis**. *“Be it further resolved: That we recognize the need for additional education, prevention, research, and policy change at the community level and societal levels, and we urge this chamber and other governing bodies to take appropriate steps to ensure progress is made”*... further promoting the general welfare of our great state of Kansas.

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