

Honorable members of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

Vaudreuil-Dorion, February 5, 2021

My name is Pierre Beauregard. I am writing to you as a private citizen engaged since 2017 as an advocate for the control of access to pornography online by minors as is the case in the physical world. As such, I was involved in the establishment of a [petition](#) which was presented to the National Assembly on March 15, 2018 by [Mrs. Rita de Santis](#).

I personally quit viewing pornography online in 2013. Then in 2016 I took mentor training to help other men, young and old, who are expressing a desire to quit this sexual habit. I can testify to the benefits of quitting porn and many men who have been mentored to do likewise will confirm similar benefits. The benefits are numerous starting with better spousal relations.

In 2018 I participated in Washington, DC, in the [Coalition to end sexual exploitation Global Summit](#) at the invitation of Glendyne Gerrard of DefendDignity. It was then that I began to understand the connection between pornography and sexual exploitation. I will not attempt to explain this link to you. Other experts, better than me, have no doubt sent you briefs to this effect.

Following the Global Summit 2020 which took place virtually last year, we have formed a group of advocates who support the approach of Senator Julie Miville-Dechêne, the efforts of the Minister of Heritage Steven Guilbeault, and those of your committee. This group has a [Facebook](#) page to promote the advancement of protection of children and non-consenting victims like Serena Fleites who testified before the committee on February 1st 2021.

December 10, 2020 was a great day, high in emotions. Thanks to the efforts of many activists like [Penny Rankin](#), VISA and Mastercard cut their business link with MindGeek. That day I participated in the weekly demonstration in front of MindGeek to request verification of age and consent for people appearing on pornographic sites. It was in front of this building at 7777 Décarie in Montreal that I heard the news. A young activist named Rafaela Diaz has been demonstrating there every week since October 2nd 2020. You can consult her FB page [Arrêter ExploitationHub](#) to testify.

Since that date, the news has continued to flow with the initiatives of the ETHI Committee, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, and Senator Julie Miville-Dechêne. Never have I been so proud to be Canadian.

Dear members of the Ethics Committee, you have the opportunity to act on behalf of underage and non-consenting victims who relive again and again the abuse they have suffered every time their video is viewed on a pornographic site. Serena Fleites courageously testified about her victimization and the difficulties she underwent to request to Pornhub the removal of those videos only to see them reappear in a matter of weeks. How many other victims, like Serena, are silent due to their fear to share their traumatic victimizations? How many victims have been driven to suicide? The many victims known and unknown are counting on you to make strong recommendations that will result in real control measures. It is only after continued pressure, which became more intense and public recently, that MindGeek has taken steps that reassure us. It would be foolish to trust MindGeek, and the entire porn industry, to self-regulate based on how long they have been ignoring criticism and denying any wrongdoing. I submit that third-party monitoring is absolutely essential and should be part of the recommendations of your committee. If the legislation has to change, be among those who can stand tall and know that you have done

what was needed to be done to make Canada a leader in the world in this field. It is high time for real change.

Let's not be fooled. The recent efforts of Mindgeek, once known as ManWin, are much more about effective marketing than a heartfelt act of contrition.

Please also consider that pornographic sites have been complacent about the ease with which minors can view pornography due to the lack of age verification on their websites. Just as controls are in place to prevent the purchase of tobacco products by minors and porn in physical stores, so should it be for internet pornography. Internet controls have been put in place for online casinos since 2007. What are we waiting for to put in place controls of a similar nature for access to adult sites online? It is a serious public health issue that must be addressed.

An adult who shares pornography faces severe penalties. A business in the physical world that exposes its customers to erotic shows must have controls in place to verify the age of their customers or face severe penalties. It is high time that websites which expose their visitors to adult content be held to the same requirements as those in the offline world. The health of our children must come first.

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Pierre Beauregard

www.controleporno.org