

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2001**

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**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1477**

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Sponsors: Senator Hagan.

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Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate.

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September 30, 2002

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
2 COMMISSION TO STUDY THE ISSUE OF LIMITING THE ACCESSIBILITY  
3 BY MINORS OF PORNOGRAPHIC WEB SITES AND SHIELDING THEM  
4 FROM MATERIALS THAT ARE HARMFUL TO MINORS, INCLUDING THE  
5 FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A .XXX INTERNET DOMAIN.

6 Whereas, a recent study requested by Congress and conducted by The  
7 National Academies acknowledged that protecting children from Internet pornography  
8 is a special challenge because while the Internet offers enormous educational and social  
9 benefits to children, it also raises concerns regarding the exposure of children to  
10 inappropriate sexually explicit materials; and

11 Whereas, The National Academies report further states that "in traditional  
12 areas such as books, films, and standard retail outlets, society has limited the access of  
13 children to certain kinds of sexually explicit material without restricting the  
14 constitutional rights of adults. The Internet poses a more serious problem because of  
15 difficulty in distinguishing between adults and children in an online environment"; and

16 Whereas, the report stresses that children can sometimes see, and even  
17 sometimes seek out, images that may not be appropriate for them. In comparison to  
18 other media, the Internet has features that make responsible supervision over the  
19 children who use it more difficult; and

20 Whereas, the General Assembly recognizes that this is a complex issue with  
21 no single solution. The General Assembly further recognizes that there is a need to  
22 develop a workable public policy that helps protect children from materials on the  
23 World Wide Web that are harmful to them, but within parameters that continue to afford  
24 Internet access to adults without unlawful restrictions; Now, therefore,  
25 Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

26 **SECTION 1.** The Legislative Research Commission may study the issue of  
27 limiting the accessibility by minors of pornographic web sites and shielding them from  
28 materials that are harmful to minors. In its study the Legislative Research Commission  
29 may consider the following:

- 1 (1) The feasibility of establishing an .XXX domain exclusively for the  
2 posting and dissemination of pornographic materials.
- 3 (2) The various technology protection measures and information  
4 management schemes that are available in the current computer  
5 market.
- 6 (3) The success and failure of current laws with regard to the protection of  
7 minors from harmful materials, the difficulties in enforcing those laws,  
8 and any revisions needed to those laws or additional resources needed  
9 to make those laws and their enforcement more effective.
- 10 (4) The development of incentives for Internet service and content  
11 providers to behave in a more responsible manner, such as taking  
12 greater care to differentiate between adults and minors before granting  
13 access to sexually explicit content.
- 14 (5) The development of public policies that would encourage  
15 self-regulatory efforts by businesses.
- 16 (6) The possibility of creating economic incentives and disincentives to  
17 encourage responsible business behavior.
- 18 (7) The development of educational strategies and tools that can be used to  
19 teach and enable young people to develop responsible decision-making  
20 skills and to use the Internet appropriately.
- 21 (8) Which issues and remedies that are identified are more appropriately  
22 addressed at the State level and which ones are more appropriately  
23 addressed at the federal level.
- 24 (9) Any other legislative, funding, or public policy issues relevant to  
25 protecting minors from harmful materials and still providing access to  
26 the many positive entertaining and educational opportunities that are  
27 available through Internet access.

28 **SECTION 2.** The Legislative Research Commission shall make a final  
29 report to the 2003 General Assembly upon its convening. The reports may include  
30 proposed legislation to carry out the recommendations of the study.

31 **SECTION 3.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.