

SABER

SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR:
EVALUATION AND RECOVERY

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EXHIBIT 8

DATE 2/16/07

ID 625

Mr. Bruce Crippen
Senate Judiciary Committee
Capitol Station
Helena, Montana 59624

RE: HB83 OBSCENITY BILL

Dear Mr. Crippen:

by way of introduction, my name is Michael Scolatti and I am a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, in private practice. For the past fifteen years I have worked with sex offenders and victims of sexual abuse. Over the past 10 years I have specialized in the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders and victims of sexual abuse. In reviewing the statistics of these past 15 years I have evaluated 1013 adults with sexual offending or sexually compulsive behaviors and approximately 200 adolescents and prepubescent children.

In addition to my private practice I am a consultant to the National Institute of Corrections, the Missoula Police Department, the Missoula County Sheriff's Department, the Missoula Fire Department, Missoula Youth Homes, Missoula and Ravalli County Youth Courts, Missoula School Districts and the Missoula Big Brothers and Sisters Program. I am a member of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers, the Montana Sex Offender Treatment Association, and Division 41: Psychology and the Law of the American Psychological Association. I hope I am not boring you with my credentials, I really wanted to address the committee in person, but my wife and I are expecting our fifth child any day (a girl) and my wife becomes extremely anxious when I tell her I am leaving the city. In the interest of domestic tranquility I opted to write to you.

I want to emphasize that my comments regarding pornography are related to the effects I have seen in my clinical practice with sex offenders and some of the research in this area. In regards to research the most consistent finding is that violent pornography involving sadomasochistic themes is significantly related to sexual crimes, especially rape. A 1984 study by Baron and Strauss found a significant correlation between the consumption of pornography (in this case soft core) and the incidence of reported rape using the 50 U.S. states as cases. In this study it was found that the incidence of rape increased by 7 per 100,000 population, for an increase in pornographic magazine consumption.

A finding closer to my work with sex offenders indicates that 46% of rapists, 59% of homosexual pedophiles and 50 of heterosexual pedophiles reported a desire to own some pornography while only 29% of the non-offending men in a control group reported a similar desire (Goldstein et al., 1974). Of those men reporting a desire to own pornography, 100% of the rapists, 80% of the homosexual pedophiles and 83% of the heterosexual pedophiles actually owned some type of pornographic material. Only half of the non offending men in the control group actually owned some type of pornography. Therefore, the men in the sex offender groups were about three times more likely to own pornography than non-offending men. Rapists and child molesters gravitate toward material which will

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sexually arouse them, making them more likely to act out in some sexual manner.

In my experience, approximately 75% of the sexual offenders I have worked with have used some type of pornographic material on a regular basis. In addition, approximately 15 to 20 percent have indicated they are "addicted" to pornography. For the most part, sex offenders use pornography to stimulate their sexual appetites, unfortunately their outlets for sexual expression could be their child, or someone else's child, daughter, or wife.

In the course of my work I have confiscated, or offenders have brought to me their collections of pornography. This material ranges the gamut from bestiality to sadomasochistic activities. One offender dropped off 17 different magazines all with women who had shaved their pubic areas. This man was not in my program for having sex with partners his own age who shaved themselves, he had sexually molested 15 girls between the ages of four and eight. He compulsively used the pictures of "shaved" women in the magazines to fulfill his fantasies of sex with children in between episodes of abuse. I could recount ten to twenty similar stories of how offenders use pornographic material to increase their deviant arousal, however I feel the preceding example is characteristic of the use of pornography by sex offenders.

For sexual offenders pornography serves to disinhibit their judgement and morals, as one offender told me, "I thought all men and women had sex like that. but it sure didn't work with my girlfriend." While this statement may seem incredibly naive or stupid it is not an uncommon sentiment among the men and teenage boys I work with. These men and boys isolate themselves, pornography often becomes their substitute for real relationships and their template for human sexuality.

What does pornography do for a sex offender? Besides the obvious answer of sexual arousal, pornography has a much more pernicious effect. Pornography objectifies, depersonalizes and dehumanizes women, men and the act of making love. It reduces people and human sexuality to a mechanical, "wham-bam-thank-you-mam" activity, devoid of caring, nurturance and love which should be the centerpiece of male-female relationships. Pornography allows a sex offender to view women as a commodity, an object, a piece of meat. As one offender graphically explained, "women ain't nothing but a life support system for a pussy". Pornography directly promotes, contributes, and feeds this type of attitude.

In conclusion I respectfully ask that you and your fellow committed member vote in favor of HB83 to help in the fight against sexually offending, and in the battle against the objectification of women and human sexuality.

Thank you for your valuable time and consideration.

Sincerely



Michael J. Scolatti, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist