

The Honourable Jane Philpott  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Philpott,

I am very concerned about violent and degrading sexually explicit material on the Internet. This material is now easily accessible, affordable and anonymous. It is violent and cruel to an extent unimagined in the past, and there is very little to protect children from being exposed at younger and younger ages.

I was pleased when Motion M47 received all party support in the House of Commons. I expected that a thorough study of the issue by the Health Committee would lead to strong recommendations for government action to, at least, restrict access to this material by children.

Many children, and most teens, have seen sexually degrading images online, often accidentally. During their brief study on Motion M-47, the committee heard that viewing this easily accessible material is contributing to the rise in sexual harassment, assault and rape culture on school and college campuses across the country.

I was very disappointed to see that the Health Committee appears to have disregarded much of the powerful testimony from expert witnesses who clearly stated that education alone is not enough to protect children from the harms of violent pornography online. It is a public health issue that requires government action.

The Health Committee's report falls far short of stating the harms to the health of children, women and men clearly outlined by many of the witnesses, and of calling for a comprehensive response from government to address these harms.

As you prepare a response to the committee's report, please consider the full testimony of the witnesses and, in particular, their recommendations for government action in the area of age verification.

Violent and degrading pornography is a critical issue for Canadian society. Please take steps to bring about further study of this issue, including research by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Thank you.