

Sen. Wanggaard: Protecting kids from online porn one step closer

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Online Porn Websites Must Use Age Verification Tools

MADISON – The State Senate approved a bill today requiring online pornography websites to verify that the person accessing their website is at least 18 years old. Assembly Bill 105, authored by Senator Van Wanggaard (R-Racine) and Representative Joy Goeben (R-Hobart) is based on bipartisan laws in 25 other states.

“Protecting kids from harmful content shouldn’t be controversial or partisan — it’s common sense,” said Wanggaard. “Right now, it’s shockingly easy for a child to stumble onto online pornography. We already require age restrictions for cigarettes, tobacco, alcohol, and gambling because we know those products can harm minors. Online pornography can be just as damaging, and it should be treated with the same level of seriousness and responsibility.”

Under Assembly Bill 105, websites that have at least one-third of their content consisting of “material harmful to children” (pornography), must utilize a system to verify that the person accessing the site is at least 18 years of age. The bill requires the age verification system to immediately delete any personally identifying information once the age is verified. In the event the data is not deleted, a person may sue the company for damages. Senate Amendment 2 to Assembly Bill 105 removes provisions that required pornography websites to block VPN addresses.

“This bill is carefully crafted to ensure online pornography sites to meaningful steps to verify age,” Wanggaard said. “It does not, and the U.S. Supreme Court agrees, infringe on free speech. It simply enforces age limits that most Wisconsinites, parents, and 25 other states agree are reasonable and necessary.”

Assembly Bill 105 now returns to the Assembly for concurrence in the senate amendment. The Assembly is anticipated to send the bill to Governor Evers this week.