

***Technology, Telecommunications
& Energy Committee***

SJM 8007

Brief Description: *Requesting a specific domain designation for internet pornography websites.*

Sponsors: *By Senators Shin, Costa, Roach, Prentice, Rasmussen, Regala and Patterson.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Requests that Congress, the President, and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) establish an .xxx top level domain name for adult-content Internet sites.*

Hearing Date: *3/28/01*

Staff: *Pam Madson (786-7166).*

Background:

The Internet, the world's largest computer network, began through communications networks established by the U.S. Department of Defense in the 1960's. These networks were later linked to other networks established by other government agencies, educational institutions and research facilities. To manage the network, an address system was developed known as the Domain Name System (DNS).

The DNS divides the Internet into groups of addresses. In the United States, internet addresses usually end with one of six abbreviations, called generic top level domains:

- *.com (commercial organizations)*
- *.edu (educational organizations)*
- *.gov (governmental agencies)*
- *.mil (federal military organizations)*
- *.net (networking organizations)*
- *.org (nonprofit organizations)*

The DNS is managed by a nonprofit corporation known as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) founded in 1998.

No new top level domains have been added since the late 1980s. ICANN has recently proposed seven new generic top level domains:

- .aero (air-transport industry)*
- .biz (businesses)*
- .coop (nonprofit cooperatives)*
- .info (unrestricted use)*
- .museum (museums)*
- .name (individual names)*

There have been attempts to protect children from internet access to pornographic web sites, both by legislation and by business policy. Both have been challenged and remain highly controversial. Filtering software is available to help identify and block access to certain web sites.

Summary of Bill:

The Congress, the President, and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers are requested to create a generic top level domain of .xxx for adult-content Internet addresses. An .xxx domain will help to protect children from adult-content web sites by enhancing the effectiveness of filtering software.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.