

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8007

As Passed Senate, February 13, 2002

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

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Economic Development & Telecommunications: 1/29/01, 2/6/01 [DP]; 1/29/02 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/9/02, 48-0; 2/13/02, 42-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators T. Sheldon, Chair; B. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Finkbeiner, McCaslin, Rossi and Stevens.

Staff: William Bridges (786-7424)

Background: The Internet, the world's largest computer network, started in the late 1960s as a cooperative effort among the federal government, universities, and research facilities. To manage the network, an address system was developed called 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 (education organizations)
- .gov (government agencies)
- .mil (federal military organizations)
- .net (networking organizations)
- .org (non-profit organizations)

The DNS is managed by a nonprofit corporation called the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). ICANN has recently approved seven new generic top level domains:

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

- .pro (accountants, lawyers, and physicians)

Some people believe ICANN should create a generic top level domain for adult-content web sites. This would allow filtering software to easily detect such sites and prevent children from viewing them.

Summary of Bill: Congress 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 protect children from adult-content web sites by enhancing the reliability of Internet filtering software.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: The technology of the Internet has brought many conveniences, but it has also made it easier for children to view pornography. An .xxx domain could make it easier for filtering technology to protect children from the unintentional viewing of pornography. The joint memorial is based on one introduced during the 2000 YMCA Youth Legislature by a 14-year-old participant from Edmonds, Washington.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Paul Shin, Prime Sponsor; Clare Donahue, OSPI (pro); Paul Hawley, Edmonds (pro); Carol Taylor Cann, PTA (pro).