

HB38

SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY AMENDMENTS SPONSORED BY: REP. TRAVIS M. SEEGMILLER

This Committee bill enjoys broad-based support from dozens of organizations.

Upgrades
protections for
Utah's public
schoolchildren

BILL MECHANICS

- HB38 requires resource providers who contract with UETN to block obscene and pornographic material for K-12 students in public schools.
- The bill applies codified definitions of pornography and obscenity.
- UETN contracts under the assumption that resources are clean and safe for children. This bill does not remove content that is meant to be there.

Supported By:
Utah School Boards
Association/
Utah School
Superintendents
Association Joint
Legislative
Committee
(USBA/USSA) &
Utah PTA

RATIONALE

- The vendors of digital resources for our children enjoy large contracts. Taxpayer funds must be invested only in safe, reliable digital research tools that protect kids.
- Filters alone don't work on troublesome sites. Once a scholarly digital resource is authenticated, any content found therein is assumed to be safe. It's not always safe.

Not Opposed By:
UETN

RELEVANT HISTORY

- High-traffic searches related to pornographic content have been identified previously.
- Examples of content that our public schoolchildren can access include: live links to pedophilia websites, sex toy advertisements for children, promotion of BDSM (torture sex), promotion of polygamy and group sexual encounters, pornographic search hubs, titillating exposés, etc.
- Utah parents have taken thousands of screenshots documenting harmful sexual content found in digital resources that are currently available to Utah's K-12 public schoolchildren (available to legislators upon request).
- Since 2018, UETN has monitored the specific scholarly digital resource (a database) that triggered prior concerns. Reports show that search terms suggest children's ongoing access to pornographic content.

Successful In:
Idaho

PROTECTING UTAH'S CHILDREN MUST BE A PRIORITY

Similar Policy
Efforts In:
35 US States

- HB38 is informed by a similar effort that has already succeeded in Idaho. After Idaho passed its bill into law, digital resource vendors took up the call to action and responsibly built new digital resource tools with safe content that complied with Idaho's new law (see LiLISchools.org).
- A representative of the Idaho Commission of Libraries confirms that the enhanced curation process used in the development of LiLISchools.org in Idaho is an effective and reasonable undertaking.
- Former Representative Eric Hutchings, whose wife is a school principal, compared this issue to school lunch. He explained that, just like poison in a school lunch wouldn't be tolerated for a second, we must not tolerate poison in our digital resources either.
- Please support HB38, to "put our foot down" when public schoolkids are exposed to pornography at school. This bill is a good first step to better protect Utah's kids.