

Here is some background information about the Bill for your consideration, provided to BPW Canada from Courage for Freedom:

(Partial forward)

The purpose of Bill S-203 is to protect young people from exposure to sexually explicit material online and to require pornographic websites to verify the age of their users before giving them access to their content. The introduction of this bill is the culmination of a reflection process on legislative measures that would reduce the risks resulting from the exposure of children to pornography. Sexually explicit material is increasingly violent, degrading and demeaning, and poses many risks to their health, safety and well-being. This exposure has been associated with many harmful effects such as addiction to pornography, reinforcement of gender stereotypes, tendencies towards sexual violence, as well as violent behaviour towards women.

Moreover, this bill would enable the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to require that steps be taken by Internet service providers to prevent sexually explicit material from being made available to young persons on the Internet. Therefore, a pornographic website that is accessible in Canada but hosted abroad could be blocked by a Canadian Internet service provider.

After being tabled and read for the first time at the Senate on September 30th, the bill is currently pending for its second reading. We invite you to stay tuned for the second reading, since Senator Miville-Dechéne will give an exhaustive speech on the substance of the bill at the next Senate sitting planned on October 27th.

Senators will then debate the objective of the bill before sending it to one of the Senate's committee to be studied.

If you have any other questions regarding specific elements of Bill S-203, we encourage you to email the Legal Affairs advisor to Senator Julie Miville-Dechéne:

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