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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 549**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**

(Proposed by the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions
on January 31, 2017)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Marshall, R.G.)

Recognizing pornography as leading to individual and societal harms.

WHEREAS, pornography perpetuates a sexually toxic environment; and

WHEREAS, efforts to prevent pornography exposure and addiction, to educate individuals and families concerning its harms, and to develop recovery programs should be addressed systemically in ways that hold broader influences accountable; and

WHEREAS, pornography may contribute to the hypersexualization of teenagers, and even prepubescent children, in our society; and

WHEREAS, owing to advances in technology and the universal availability of the Internet, young children can be exposed to what used to be referred to as hardcore, but is now considered mainstream, pornography at an alarming rate; and

WHEREAS, the average age of exposure to pornography is now 11 to 12 years of age; and

WHEREAS, this early exposure can lead to low self-esteem and body image disorders, an increase in problematic sexual activity at younger ages, and an increased desire among adolescents to engage in risky sexual behavior; and

WHEREAS, exposure to pornography may serve as children's and youths' sex education and may shape their sexual templates; and

WHEREAS, pornography may normalize violence and abuse; and

WHEREAS, pornography often depicts rape and abuse as if such acts are harmless; and

WHEREAS, pornography equates violence with sex and pain with pleasure, which increases the demand for sex trafficking, prostitution, images of child sexual abuse, and child pornography; and

WHEREAS, use of pornography can potentially negatively affect brain development and functioning, contribute to emotional and medical illnesses, shape deviant sexual arousal, and lead to difficulty in forming or maintaining intimate relationships as well as problematic or harmful sexual behaviors and addiction; and

WHEREAS, use of pornography, by either partner, is linked to an increased likelihood that individuals will engage in group intercourse; and

WHEREAS, recent research indicates that pornography is potentially biologically addictive, which means the user requires more novelty, often in the form of more shocking material, in order to be satisfied; and

WHEREAS, this biological addiction leads to increasing themes of risky sexual behaviors, extreme degradation, violence, child sexual abuse, and child pornography; and

WHEREAS, pornography use is linked to lessening desire to marry, dissatisfaction in marriage, and infidelity; and

WHEREAS, this link demonstrates that pornography has a detrimental effect on the family unit; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly recognize pornography as leading to individual and societal harms; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly recognize the need for education, prevention, research, and policy change at the community and societal level.