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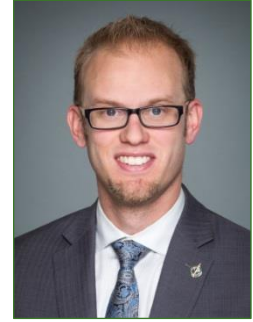
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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

**Arnold Viersen, MP**

Peace River—Westlock



# MP Viersen introduces the Stopping Internet Sexual Exploitation (SISE) Act

May 27, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ottawa, ON - Today, MP Arnold Viersen introduced Bill C-302, the *Stopping Internet Sexual Exploitation (SISE) Act* in the House of Commons. The SISE Act would require those making or distributing pornographic material for a commercial purpose to verify the age and consent of each person depicted. It also would prevent the distribution of pornographic material when consent has been withdrawn. Those who fail to verify age and consent face escalating penalties or jail time mirroring those in the mandatory child pornography reporting laws.

“For years, pornographic platforms in Canada have published sexually explicit material without any requirement to verify the age or consent of those depicted in them,” says MP Arnold Viersen. “As a result, egregious videos of sex trafficking, child exploitation, and sexual assault have proliferated on Canadian pornography websites. Many of these videos have been monetized, bringing in massive profits.

“Once a video of exploitation has been uploaded, it is virtually impossible to eliminate. We have heard testimony from survivors whose lives have been shattered by the reckless actions of companies like MindGeek. Countless survivors have also been forced to relive their trauma and track down their own abusers in order to have content depicting their abuse removed. We must do more to prevent these videos from ever reaching the internet in the first place. It is time to place the burden of due diligence and corporate responsibility on companies rather than survivors and law enforcement.



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“Consent matters. If a website is going to profit from making or publishing pornographic content, the SISE Act ensures they must verify the age and consent of every individual in every video.”

## **Quotes**

*“Individuals who have been victimized are faced with the overwhelming task of trying to remove illegal content that should never have been distributed and profited from in the first place. It’s time for pornography websites to be held accountable. Content should not be hosted without proof that all the individuals depicted are adults and have consented to both the creation and distribution of the material on that platform.”*

### **Defend Dignity**

*“It is unacceptable that companies such as MindGeek have operated with impunity while profiting off traumatic experiences of sexual assault, exploitation, and sex trafficking. Canadians must take a stand and insist that our country not be a safe haven for people to financially benefit from the recorded sexual victimization of anyone - especially youth. The SISE Act is a necessary step in ensuring that those who capitalize on filmed sex crimes are held accountable for the immense harm their actions cause.”*

### **Andrea Heinz, Activist, Exited from the Commercial Sex Trade in Edmonton, Alberta**

*"We know that companies like Pornhub have facilitated and distributed the uploading of videos of minors being sexually exploited and assaulted. We also know that non-consenting adults and trafficked women have been raped and tortured for the world to see. It is the role of Parliament to protect its citizens from predatory industries and the SISE Act provides important tools to help accomplish this."*

### **Megan Walker, Executive Director, London Abused Women’s Centre**

*The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) welcomes the proposed Bill “Stopping Internet Sexual Exploitation Act” that calls for amendments to the Criminal Code to protect those whose rights are brutally ignored. Content, acquired and shared without consent, is unacceptable in a just society. That children, who cannot “give” consent, are victims is to contravene all principles and laws, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The distribution of adult content must include a verification process that establishes that all participants are of legal age and that all participants depicted have consented to the distribution and commodification of the material. That material acquired and commodified without consent continues to circulate is to revictimize the victims. Pornography websites and other platforms must be held accountable.”*

### **Patricia Leson, President, National Council of Women of Canada**

*“The Salvation Army has worked closely over the years with people who have experienced or survived sexual exploitation. We know that their voices and wishes are rarely heard or respected. The Stopping Internet Sexual Exploitation Act is an important step toward establishing safeguards to protect adults and minors from having unwanted images of them posted and shared over the internet for commercial gain at their expense.”*

**Commissioner Floyd Tidd, National Leader, The Salvation Army in Canada**

*“On behalf of the membership of the Montreal Council of Women (MWC) I wish to confirm our deep concern for those whose lives have been upended by having their images involuntarily and/or without consent shared on websites and other platforms such as the Montreal based Pornhub. The proposed “Stopping Internet Sexual Exploitation Act” bill calls for much needed amendments to be made to the Criminal Code to protect children and those who have not given consent for their images and other content to be shared and commodified.”*

**Penny Rankin, Past President, Montreal Council of Women**

*Parents Aware offers our full support on the Criminal Code amendments that are proposed in the Stopping Internet Sexual Exploitation Act. We feel that the addition of these offences with penalties is an effective way to hold companies and individuals criminally responsible when creating pornographic content depicting underage participants.*

**Lisa Whitsitt, Director of Educational Outreach, Parents Aware**

*“There is not a more important piece of legislation to protect victims from criminal sexual exploitation online than mandatory age and consent verification for pornography production and distribution online. This is a long overdue, commonsense, and urgently needed regulation that has the potential to protect thousands, if not millions of individuals, including children, from facing life altering, traumatic, sexual abuse.”*

**Laila Mickelwait, Founder, Traffickinghub movement and CEO, Justice Defense Fund**

*“The pornography industry systemically fails to verify age or consent – leading to horrific trauma for survivors of sex trafficking, child sexual abuse, and non-consensually shared/recorded intimate images as their sexual exploitation is viewed around the world. It is time for a paradigm shift, and for survivors to be heard. This bill is an important step in that direction.”*

**Dani Bianculli Pinter, Senior Legal Counsel, National Center on Sexual Exploitation**

*“Children and youth face devastating, lifelong consequences when images of their abuse and exploitation are streamed and distributed. Commercial pornography sites must be held responsible to ensure exploitative and non-consensual images are not uploaded and that they are swiftly removed once discovered. The onus must not be on victims. By requiring that the age and consent of every person depicted in sexually explicit material be verified before it is posted online, the Stopping Internet Sexual Exploitation Act puts the responsibility where it belongs. We support this bill’s measures to ensure illegal content is not uploaded in the first place.”*

**Julia Beazley, Director of Public Policy, the EFC’s Centre for Faith and Public Life**