



March 13, 2013

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GENERAL SESSION

March 6, 2013

Introductory Speeches by Nominees for WSLC Officers for Biennium 2013 – 2015

General Session II

Program: SJR15 Joint Resolution Regarding the Impact of Adult Images on Children's Development

**Presented by: Health & Human Services/
Retirement & Independent Entities**

Director: Rebecca Reese

Chair: Jean Madsen

Speakers: Sen. Todd Weiler (R) Dist. 23 (Davis, Salt Lake Counties) – sponsor, SJR15
Jennifer Brown DDS – Researcher for SJR15

Sen. Weiler introduced his Resolution by saying he believes it would have been impractical this session to submit a bill impacting pornography. Instead, he chose to draft **SJR15** to serve as a warning that softcore (or gateway) pornography, such as that seen on billboards and store displays, is detrimental to the brain development of children. He also said he is honored to sponsor **SJR15**, which passed the Senate and is waiting to be taken up by the House. Introducing Jennifer Brown, the senator said he first began working with Dr. Brown

when she presented her research to an Interim Committee last summer.

Dr. Brown described her belief that, as the mother of young boys, she has a responsibility to address the issue of gateway pornography. The tipping point of her concern occurred over a year ago when she was with her boys in a local mall. Together they walked by a particular store featuring images and signage that struck her as intensely risqué. Distressed by her boys' exposure to images she regarded as more

than simply inappropriate, she resolved that something needed to be done.

She said our society is routinely assaulted by gateway images that are employed by most advertising venues, public and private, including shopping malls. She added that the increasing acceptance of these images actually benefits the pornography industry. The images can become, in essence, the gateway to hardcore pornography.

Since then, she has researched the issue of exposure to gateway pornography on the developing brain. In cooperation with the Davis County prosecutor, Dr. Brown has amassed scientific data she hopes will affect the public's awareness of the dangers of children's exposure to gateway pornography. In similar fashion, she noted, it was scientific data that finally brought about change in the public's awareness of tobacco as a harmful substance.

Dr. Brown stressed the popular culture should not deter our children from reaching their full potential. The pornography industry's freedom of speech is not overriding. If pornography is shown to impair the development of children's brains, she said, it should be subject to control.

She will work with prosecutors throughout the state in anticipation of producing a bill, possibly next session. In the meantime, **SJR15** is intended to raise public awareness and prepare the way. It is her intent to change the discussion of gateway pornography from morality to science. The following is a summary of the written research presented by Dr. Brown:

Children's brains are especially subject to external stimuli (neuro-toxicity). When a child or teen is exposed to gateway porn images, a surge of neurotransmitters (Dopamine and Norepinephrine) and stress

hormones (Cortisol, Norepinephrine, and Testosterone) is activated. Chronic elevated levels of Cortisol weaken the development of the *prefrontal cortex* in the adolescent brain and are directly linked to depression and other mood disorders. Elevated levels of Norepinephrine can cause "flash bulb memories" that can be recalled at any time.

The *prefrontal cortex* is the portion of the brain responsible for the highest level of thinking (self-control, moral judgment, analysis, and complex cognitive behaviors). High levels of Norepinephrine and Dopamine inhibit functioning of the *prefrontal cortex*.

The *basal ganglion* is the portion of the brain responsible for more primitive, reflexive types of behaviors. These include compulsiveness, increased violence and aggression, loss of natural empathy, and loss of will power. High levels of Norepinephrine and Dopamine enhance the functioning of the *basal ganglia*.

Over time, regular viewing of gateway pornography forms new neural pathways that circumvent the *prefrontal cortex* and favor the *basal ganglia*. Not only is there an immediate reduction in function of the *prefrontal cortex* by viewing sexually explicit material, over time there are detrimental long-term changes to it. A weaker *prefrontal cortex* and dominant *basal ganglia* is also directly linked to several mental and mood disorders, including ADHD, anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder. Subjects with a dominant *basal ganglia* are shown to be much more likely to engage in addictive behaviors.

For more information, contact Dr. Brown at JenBrown@yahoo.com.

Reported by Stuart Gygi

General Session III

Program: SB60 Resolution of Abortion Statistics and Reporting Requirements

**Presented by: Health & Human Services/
Retirement & Independent Entities**

Director: Rebecca Reese

Chair: Jean Madsen

Speaker: Will Kleinman – Intern to **Sen. Margaret Dayton (R) Dist. 15** Utah County (Provo/Orem) – sponsor, SB60

Will Kleinman offered Sen. Dayton’s regrets at not being able to attend. Speaking in the senator’s behalf, he said **SB60** requires the Utah State Health Department to make its statistics regarding abortion available to the legislature and the public. The information, he explained, is already required to be made available to states under federal regulation. However, there is a concern that “as federal regulations tend to come and go,” the data may not be available in the future unless the state also confirms its continuing right to it. He acknowledged the statistics in question could be used to consider future state legislation.

Responding to questions, Mr. Kleinman reaffirmed that respondents would be not be

obliged to give any more information than is currently required on the federal form. He did allow as how the wording of the bill may not make that point clear. He stressed that the data in question (which includes race and ethnicity) is not requested as a means of stigmatizing those respondents who are seeking an abortion. He also said he was unsure as to whether the information gathered would be used, as has been rumored, to determine whether gender-selective abortions are occurring in Utah.

For more information, contact Sen. Dayton at mdayton@le.utah.gov or Will Kleinman at wkleinman@le.utah.gov.

Reported by Pam Grange

Program: HB48 Medical Reserve Corps Amendments

**Presented by: Health & Human Services/
Retirement & Independent Entities**

Director: Rebecca Reese

Chair: Jean Madsen

Speaker: Rep. Edward H. Redd (R) Dist. 4 (Cache County) – sponsor, HB48

Rep. Redd began by giving background information regarding the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). It consists of a network of community-based units established by local organizations to meet the public health needs of their communities. The MRC consists of medical and non-medical volunteers who supplement existing response capabilities in times of emergency. The MRC provides the structure necessary to pre-identify, train, and activate medical and public health volunteers.

The MRC often constitutes the “first responders” in a given crisis or emergency situation. Chapters exist throughout Utah and on a national level. They can be quickly mobilized by the State Health Department when the need arises. For example, Rep. Redd’s own community, Cache Valley, used the MRC volunteers to help administer immunizations during the 2009 influenza epidemic.

HB48 amends various codes related to the Medical Reserve Corps. It authorizes local health departments to train the healthcare professionals who volunteer for the MRC during public health emergencies and disasters. Most importantly, it also amends the *Healthcare Providers Immunity from Liability Act* to provide liability protections to the MRC workers who are training to serve the public during emergencies.

Responding to questions, Rep. Redd clarified the fact that **HB48** would offer liability protection only to *licensed* volunteer respondents when they are called into “instant command” emergency training situations. Unlicensed volunteers who are *certified* by The Red Cross or other organizations are already protected under the Good Samaritan law.

Reported by Pam Grange

*Note: A Resolution in support of **SB48** was presented to WSLC membership by the Health & Human Services Committee – **Resolution PASSED***

**THIS BULLETIN IS A PUBLICATION OF
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