

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 6, 2019

The Honorable William Barr
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Barr:

We write to you today out of concern for the rule of law as well as the welfare of our people.

The Internet and other evolving technologies are fueling the explosion of obscene pornography by making it more accessible and visceral. This explosion in pornography coincides with an increase in violence towards women and an increase in the volume of human trafficking as well as child pornography. Victims are not limited to those directly exploited, however, and include society writ large. This phenomenon is especially harmful to youth, who are being exposed to obscene pornography at exponentially younger ages.

Fortunately, U.S. obscenity laws exist that, if enforced, can ameliorate this problem, as you well know from your previous term as U. S. Attorney General when you effectively shut down the pornography industry and dramatically decreased child pornography in America.

Those U.S. laws prohibit distribution of obscene pornography on the Internet, on cable/satellite TV, in hotels/motels, by retail or wholesale establishments, and by common carrier. Yet the enforcement of obscenity laws was stopped by the Obama Administration when Attorney General Eric Holder disbanded the Obscenity Prosecution Task Force in the Criminal Division.

In August 2016, then-candidate Donald J. Trump signed the first-ever anti-pornography pledge. This asserted that, if elected, President Trump would enforce federal obscenity laws to stop the explosion of obscene pornography. This pledge has so far been ignored in the Trump Administration with the result that the harms of illegal pornography have continued unabated, affecting children and adults so acutely to the point that 15 state legislatures have declared that pornography is causing a public health crisis. It is imperative that you follow through on this important campaign promise made by Mr. Trump.

Given the pervasiveness of obscenity it's our recommendation that you declare the prosecution of obscene pornography a criminal justice priority and urge your U.S. Attorneys to bring prosecutions against the major producers and distributors of such material.

We urge you to take this simple yet important step toward protecting the lives of those affected by these long-ignored crimes. We look forward to your response regarding this request and other action the Department of Justice is prepared to take in light of these abuses.

Sincerely,



JIM BANKS
Member of Congress



MARK MEADOWS
Member of Congress



VICKY HARTZLER
Member of Congress



BRIAN BABIN
Member of Congress