

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

**BILL #:** HR 597 Sexual Solicitation and Abuse  
**SPONSOR(S):** Bendross-Mindingall  
**TIED BILLS:** **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SR 842

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REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) Safety & Security Council		Cunningham	Havlicak
2) Rules & Calendar Council			
3)			
4)			
5)			

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### SUMMARY ANALYSIS

HR 597 encourages parents and children to learn about the incidence of sexual abuse and the risks associated with online communication. The resolution urges parents to learn how to protect their children while they are online and how and where to report cases of sexual solicitation and exploitation which occur over the internet.

## FULL ANALYSIS

### I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

#### A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

The resolution does not appear to implicate any of the House Principles.

#### B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

HR 597 encourages parents and children to learn about the incidence of sexual abuse and the risks associated with online communication. The resolution urges parents to learn how to protect their children while they are online and how and where to report cases of sexual solicitation and exploitation which occur over the internet.

In support of the resolution, HR 597 provides the following "whereas" clauses:

- Whereas, nationwide, one in three girls and one in six boys experience some form of sexual abuse before age 18, and
- Whereas, sexual assaults comprise 67 percent of the crimes against juvenile victims, and
- Whereas, by the end of 1998, more than 40 percent of all American homes had computers and 25 percent had Internet access, and children and teenagers constitute one of the fastest-growing groups of Internet users, with an estimated 77 million children having online access in 2005, and
- Whereas, educating parents and children concerning the risks that are associated with the Internet is of paramount importance to the safety of children, and
- Whereas, the Center for Missing and Exploited Children reports that only one-third of the households having Internet access are proactively protecting their children by using filtering or blocking software, and
- Whereas, 75 percent of children are willing to share personal information online about themselves and their family in exchange for goods and services, and
- Whereas, the website of the Department of Law Enforcement reports that only about 25 percent of the youth who have encountered a sexual approach or solicitation while using the Internet told a parent, and
- Whereas, the Crimes Against Children Research Center reports that one in five teenagers in the United States regularly logging on to the Internet reports that he or she has received an unwanted sexual solicitation via the Internet, and
- Whereas, research indicates that 69 percent of parents and 76 percent of youth do not know where or how to report incidents of sexual solicitation on the Internet<sup>1</sup>

#### C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Not applicable.

### II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

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<sup>1</sup> It appears many of the statistics cited in the resolution are based on a survey conducted by The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. In 1999, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children provided funding to the director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire to conduct a survey on Internet victimization of youth. Fifteen hundred youths, aged 10-17 who used the internet at least once per month in the previous six months were surveyed. The survey researched sexual solicitation approaches, aggressive sexual solicitation involving offline contact, exposure of sexual material, and threats. The report concluded that the subject area is in its infancy and there remains much to learn about the magnitude of the problem, the characteristics of the victims and perpetrators, impact on children, and strategies for prevention and intervention.

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

**III. COMMENTS**

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable because this resolution does not appear to: require the counties or cities to spend funds or take action requiring the expenditure of funds; reduce the authority that cities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate; or reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with cities or counties.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

D. STATEMENT OF THE SPONSOR

No statement was submitted.

**IV. AMENDMENTS/COUNCIL SUBSTITUTE CHANGES**