

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence
s/c: New Offenses and Changed Penalties
For SB 20

Compiled on: Thursday, April 24, 2025 7:39 PM

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(SUBCOMMITTEE: NEW OFFENSES AND CHANGED PENALTIES)

Hearing Date: April 24, 2025 8:00 AM

Ilya Ostanin Fitzhugh
self, undergraduate student
San Antonio, TX

Hello, my name is Ilya. I am a Biochemistry student at UT Austin and graduated as valedictorian of my high school. Senate Bill 20's stated goals of regulating AI child pornography are virtuous, however the specific wording in the bill, either purposefully or accidentally, has been left so vague and broad that people like me who are perfectly upstanding citizens are at risk of being mischaracterized and treated as felons.

The issue at heart here is that what the state considers "obscene" or "lacking literary value" can be subjective when judges and representatives are not partial to what the zeitgeist in the younger generation currently is. The reason I bring this up and the main reason that I am offering my comments here today is that anime, as in Japanese animation, and related merchandise would essentially be wholesale wiped out under the current version of this bill. The reason for this is that a) the average age of anime characters is somewhere around 16, and most stories often take place in high school or involve high schoolers, and b) the appeal of anime is that the subject matter is taboo and does not align with mainstream American standards, which is attractive for young people who often want to feel rebellious and independent. For reference, anime does not have explicit depictions of sex, but can contain nudity (either artistic or sensationalist), kissing between siblings where one party is underage, child abuse in the sense of physical violence, short women depicted with disproportionately large breasts, teenagers with revealing clothing, child slavery, and other such images that the government could easily define as "obscene" and either handwave or argue away the merits of where these images actually come from.

If the current version of this bill ends up being passed and signed by the governor, it puts at risk the livelihoods of people who for the past 20 years have been nothing but moral and virtuous yet will be wrongly persecuted because the government arbitrarily and rashly thinks they are pedophiles just for enjoying media that is slightly disconnected from the mainstream. If the government cares about our first amendment rights and respects its citizens, these arguments should be brought up in the house, this bill should be amended, and, failing that, this bill should not pass the House altogether. Thank you, and I hope you take my comments into consideration.

Lisa Wittrock
Self- substitute teacher
Austin, TX

My son's 5th grade teacher was arrested last month after he was caught with child pornography in his possession as well as for taking photos of his students and using AI to create his own porn. This should 1000% be a criminal offense, as these offenders are known for escalation as well as for repeating their offenses.

Every effort should be taken to keep these people off the streets and away from our most vulnerable population, our children.

Alessandra Haagensen

self / photographer

Austin, TX

The modern world is a scary one. Child predators come in far more shapes and sizes than when I was a child. The technological world has opened so many more opportunities of exploiting children and artificial intelligence is only allowing this to happen with even more ease. As a photographer, as a resident of Texas for the last 27 years, and most importantly, as a mother ... I implore you to pass this law and make predators accountable for their actions. One should not be able to hide behind the guise that they at least did not physically harm a child(ren) - because the truth is, we don't know the potential physical harm. It may not be immediate, it could be years in the future. On top of the emotional abuse these actions will put the victims.

Our job as a society is to teach, guide and PROTECT our children in every which way. Predators should be punished - they should be punished for not only having possession and distributing of child pornography, but especially for the creation of it!!! How is this not a more deplorable offense than possession?? I will never understand this. Regardless, let's show these disturbed individuals that this will not be tolerated!

Li Lam

Self (Retired RN)

Plano, TX

I am against SB 20. The intent was to focus on AI generated material; however, this bill includes animation and cartoon. The language contained in this bill, "appears to be of a child younger than 18 years of age" is too vague and could unintentionally criminalize art, manga and even Classic Disney animated movies (Snow White character is only 14 years old, Sleeping Beauty character is only 16 years old, and Belle from Beauty and the Beast is 17 years old). There are also many animated characters in shows, movies and video games who "appear" younger than 18 years of age due to the facial characteristics that society defines as young. I believe in monitoring AI and keeping children safe; however, this bill is an overreach. Animation and cartoons should be excluded from this bill and the focus kept on AI. Thank you for your time.