



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
STATE LEGISLATURE

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Sponsor Statement

HB 254 (33-LSo990\U.A) PROHIBITS PORNOGRAPHY TO MINORS

"An Act relating to minors and the Internet; and relating to use of social media by minors."

House Bill 254 is a pivotal legislative endeavor, aimed at confronting the escalating public health crisis fueled by the pervasive influence of pornography and social media on minors. This proactive intervention disrupts the tools utilized by traffickers and staunchly defends against the ease of access to explicit content for vulnerable young individuals.

In recent years, we have witnessed a troubling surge in minors' exposure to both pornography and social media, propelled by technological advancements and the omnipresence of explicit material online. This premature exposure not only accelerates the sexualization of young minds but also exacerbates issues such as school bullying and fosters unrealistic self-expectations, demanding immediate legislative action.

House Bill 254 acknowledges the profound connection between pornography and exploitation, recognizing that individuals involved in the adult industry may be victims of coercion and trafficking, blurring the distinction between consensual adult participation and exploitation. Many are coerced into participation against their will, exposing the dark underbelly of the industry.

With the amendments added on the House floor, House Bill 254 directly addresses these pressing concerns by mandating age verification measures for accessing social media accounts as well as pornography. Furthermore, it allocates grants to parents to alleviate the financial burden of purchasing parental control software, empowering them to safeguard their children's online experiences effectively.

In essence, the passage of House Bill 254 signifies an urgent and indispensable step in safeguarding the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of our youth. It underscores our collective obligation to cultivate a secure and nurturing environment where minors can flourish and develop into resilient individuals, shielded from the harmful effects of explicit material and social media exposure.