

1 H.936

2 Introduced by Committee on Judiciary

3 Date:

4 Subject: Crimes and criminal procedure; sexual exploitation of children

5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to amend the  
6 laws regarding sexual exploitation of children by criminalizing the simulation  
7 of prohibited conduct; to expand the definition of “sexual performance” and of  
8 “promote”; and to prohibit accessing child sexual abuse material with intent to  
9 view.

10 An act relating to sexual exploitation of children

11 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

12 Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. chapter 64 is amended to read:

13 CHAPTER 64. SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

14 § 2821. DEFINITIONS

15 As used in this chapter:

16 (1) “Child” means any person under ~~the age of~~ 16 years of age.

17 ~~(2) “Sexual conduct” means any of the following:~~

- 1           (A) ~~any conduct involving contact between the penis and the vulva,~~  
2           the penis and the penis, the penis and the anus, the mouth and the penis, the  
3           mouth and the anus, the vulva and the vulva, or the mouth and the vulva;
- 4           (B) any intrusion, however slight, by any part of a person's body or  
5           any object into the genital or anal opening of another with the intent of  
6           arousing, appealing to, or gratifying the lust, passions, or sexual desire of any  
7           person;
- 8           (C) any intentional touching, not through the clothing, of the  
9           genitals, anus, or breasts of another with the intent of arousing, appealing to,  
10          or gratifying the lust, passions, or sexual desire of any person;
- 11          (D) masturbation;
- 12          (E) bestiality; or
- 13          (F) sadomasochistic abuse for sexual purposes; or
- 14          (G) any simulation of any of the above described conduct.
- 15          (3) "Performance" means:
- 16               (A) an event that is photographed, filmed, or visually recorded; or
- 17               (B) a play, dance, or other visual presentation or exhibition before an  
18               audience

*(2) "Sexual conduct" means any of the following:*

*(A) any conduct involving contact between the penis and the vulva, the penis and the penis, the penis and the anus, the mouth and the penis, the mouth and the anus, the vulva and the vulva, or the mouth and the vulva;*

*(B) any intrusion, however slight, by any part of a person's body or any object into the genital or anal opening of another with the intent of arousing, appealing to, or gratifying the lust, passions, or sexual desire of any person;*

*(C) any intentional touching, not through the clothing, of the genitals, anus, or breasts of another with the intent of arousing, appealing to, or gratifying the lust, passions, or sexual desire of any person;*

*(D) masturbation;*

*(E) bestiality; or*

*(F) sadomasochistic abuse for sexual purposes.*

1 (4) "Sexual performance" means any performance or any part of a  
2 performance, ~~which~~ that includes sexual conduct by, with, or on a child.

3 (5) "Promote" means to procure, issue, manufacture, publish, sell, give,  
4 provide, lend, mail, deliver, distribute, disseminate, circulate, present, exhibit,  
5 advertise, make available, or offer to do the same, by any means, including  
6 electronic transmission, file sharing, or peer-to-peer networks.

*(6) "Peer-to-peer network" means a network in which two or more computers or devices share files without requiring a separate server computer or server software.*

7 § 2822. USE OF A CHILD IN A SEXUAL PERFORMANCE

8 (a) No person shall, with knowledge of the character and content, promote  
9 a sexual performance by a child or a performance that contains a lewd  
10 exhibition of the genitals, anus, or breasts of a child, or hire, employ, procure,  
11 use, cause, or induce a child to engage in such a performance.

12 (b) In any prosecution arising under this section, the defendant may raise as  
13 an affirmative defense that before the child participated in the sexual

1 performance, the defendant, in good faith, had a reasonable and factual basis to  
2 conclude that the child had in fact attained ~~the age of 16~~ years of age; and the  
3 defendant did not rely solely upon the oral allegations or representations of the  
4 child as to his or her age.

5 § 2823. CONSENTING TO A SEXUAL PERFORMANCE

6 No person who is the parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a child may,  
7 with knowledge of the character and content, consent to the participation of  
8 that child in a sexual performance or a performance including a lewd  
9 exhibition of the genitals by that child.

10 § 2824. PROMOTING A RECORDING OF SEXUAL CONDUCT

11 (a) No person may, with knowledge of the character and content, promote  
12 any photograph, film, or visual recording of sexual conduct by, with, or on a  
13 child, or of a lewd exhibition of a child's genitals or anus. This subsection  
14 does not apply to paintings, drawings, or to nonvisual or written descriptions  
15 of sexual conduct.

16 (b) In any prosecution arising under this section, the defendant may raise  
17 any of the following affirmative defenses:

18 (1) that the recording was promoted for a bona fide medical,  
19 psychological, social work, legislative, judicial, or law enforcement purpose,  
20 by or to a physician, psychologist, social worker, legislator, judge, prosecutor,

1 law enforcement officer, or other person having such a bona fide interest in the  
2 subject matter;

3 (2) that the defendant was a bona fide school, museum, or public  
4 library, or was a person acting in the course of employment as an employee or  
5 official of such an organization or of a retail outlet affiliated with and serving  
6 the educational or intended purpose of that school, museum, or library;

7 (3) that the defendant in good faith had a reasonable basis to conclude  
8 that the child in fact had attained ~~the age of~~ 16 years of age when the recording  
9 was made.

10 § 2825. PENALTIES

11 (a) A person who violates section 2822, 2823, or 2824 of this title shall be  
12 imprisoned not more than 10 years or fined not more than \$20,000.00, or both.

13 (b) Upon conviction for a violation of section 2822, 2823, or 2824 of this  
14 title of a person who has earlier been convicted under any of those sections,  
15 the person shall be imprisoned not less than one year nor more than 15 years or  
16 fined not more than \$50,000.00, or both.

17 (c) A person who violates section 2827 of this title by possessing or  
18 accessing with intent to view a photograph, film, or visual depiction, including  
19 a depiction stored electronically, which constitutes:

1 (1) a clearly lewd exhibition of a child's genitals or anus, other than a  
2 depiction of sexual conduct by a child, shall be imprisoned not more than two  
3 years or fined not more than \$5,000.00, or both;

4 (2) sexual conduct by, with, or on a child, shall be imprisoned not more  
5 than five years or fined not more than \$10,000.00, or both.

6 (d) A person who violates section 2827 of this title after being convicted of  
7 a previous violation of the same section shall be imprisoned not more than 10  
8 years or fined not more than \$50,000.00, or both.

9 (e) A person who violates section 2828 of this title shall be imprisoned not  
10 more than five years or fined not more than \$10,000.00, or both.

11 § 2826. EVIDENCE OF AGE

12 The age of a person who participated in sexual conduct or a performance  
13 that contains a lewd exhibition of the genitals, anus, or breasts, or who was  
14 solicited for either by means designated under section 2828 of this ~~chapter~~ title  
15 may be established by any method acceptable under the rules of evidence,  
16 including but not limited to the following methods:

17 (1) inferences drawn by the trier of fact from inspection of a document  
18 that depicts sexual conduct;

19 (2) testimony as to the apparent age of the person by a witness to sexual  
20 conduct; or

1           (3) expert medical testimony based upon the appearance of the person  
2 depicted in a recording of sexual conduct.

3           § 2827. POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY SEXUAL ABUSE  
4                                   MATERIAL

5           (a) No person shall, with knowledge of the character and content, possess  
6 or knowingly access with intent to view any photograph, film, or visual  
7 depiction, including any depiction ~~which~~ that is stored electronically, of sexual  
8 conduct by, with, or on a child or of a clearly lewd exhibition of a child's  
9 genitals or anus.

10           (b) This section ~~does~~ shall not apply:

11           (1) if the depiction was possessed for a bona fide medical,  
12 psychological, social work, legislative, judicial, or law enforcement purpose,  
13 by a physician, psychologist, social worker, legislator, judge, prosecutor, law  
14 enforcement officer, or other person having such a bona fide interest in the  
15 subject matter;

16           (2) if the person was a bona fide school, museum, or public library, or  
17 was a person acting in the course of employment as an employee or official of  
18 such an organization or of a retail outlet affiliated with and serving the  
19 educational or intended purpose of that school, museum, or library; or

20           (3) to paintings, drawings, or nonvisual or written descriptions of sexual  
21 conduct.

1 (c) In any prosecution arising under this section, the defendant may raise  
2 any of the following affirmative defenses, which shall be proven by a  
3 preponderance of the evidence:

4 (1) that the defendant in good faith had a reasonable basis to conclude  
5 that the child in fact had attained ~~the age of~~ 16 years of age when the depiction  
6 was made;

7 (2) that the defendant in good faith took reasonable steps, whether  
8 successful or not, to destroy or eliminate the depiction.

9 § 2828. LURING A CHILD

10 (a) No person shall knowingly solicit, lure, or entice, or to attempt to  
11 solicit, lure, or entice, a child under ~~the age of~~ 16 years of age or another  
12 person believed by the person to be a child under ~~the age of~~ 16 years of age, to  
13 engage in a sexual act as defined in section 3251 of this title or engage in lewd  
14 and lascivious conduct as defined in section 2602 of this title.

15 (b) This section applies to solicitation, luring, or enticement by any means,  
16 including in person, through written or telephonic correspondence or  
17 electronic communication.

18 (c) This section shall not apply if the person is less than 19 years ~~old of~~ age  
19 age, the child is at least 15 years ~~old of~~ age, and the conduct is consensual.

*Sec. 2. LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL*

*The Attorney General, in collaboration with the Defender General and the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs, shall examine the issue of simulated sexual conduct by, with, or on a child under 16 years of age as it*



relates to child sexual abuse material for the purpose of developing a clear, narrowly tailored legislative proposal that prohibits such conduct while ensuring that a substantial amount of constitutionally protected speech is not inadvertently swept into the purview of the statute. The Attorney General shall submit the recommendation not later than November 1, 2020 to the Joint Legislative Committee on Justice Oversight.

~~Sec. 2.~~ **Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This act shall take effect on ~~July 1, 2020~~ passage.