

Utah advances bill that would require mandatory ‘porn filter’ on smartphones and tablets

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ACLU link: <https://twitter.com/acluutah/status/1359750262718672899>

Legislators in Utah have moved forward a bill that would require all tablets and smartphones to have filters turned on by default to block porn and other “material that is harmful to minors.” The bill, [HB 72](#), was introduced by Rep. Susan Pulsipher (R-South Jordan) and passed a committee vote late last week by a 6-5 vote. It has since had its third reading on the state House floor, and state officials have begun investigating the costs associated with the proposal. Should the bill pass the Utah House and Senate, it would go into effect in 2022 and require [smart device](#) manufacturers to equip phones and tablets with a content filter that blocks [pornographic material](#) by default.

The bill has not been warmly received in the House or by free speech activists ([including the American Civil Liberties Union of Utah](#)). That has forced Pulsipher to greatly soften the legislation. The current version, for instance, has a clause requiring five other states to adopt similar measures before it becomes law in Utah. And the penalties for violations have dropped from \$2,500 to just \$10—with a \$500 cap.

Pornography is a hot-button topic in Utah. In 2016, the state declared it a [public health crisis](#). And a year ago, legislature passed requiring adult websites to put warning labels on their content (though the bill became law [without the governor’s signature](#)). Like HB 72, that bill was a shadow of its initial form. Originally, it required a label on every pornographic video and magazine declaring it “harmful to minors,” much like the warnings on packs of cigarettes.