



State of Connecticut

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Testimony

Sen. Frantz in support of SB 260 Children Committee Public Hearing February 14, 2013

Good morning Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, Senator Linares and Representative Betts. Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning in favor of SB 260, An Act Concerning the Effects of Violent Video Games on Youth Behavior.

In the aftermath of the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School, mental health experts have expressed concern over the effect of violent video games on children. Whether or not these games desensitize our children to violence or lead to more aggressive behavior, I am proposing this legislation to require the State of Connecticut to study this potential linkage in a comprehensive manner to determine whether additional public policy measures can be put in place to prevent this potentially negative impact on our children.

After some initial research, it appears that our understanding of this issue is lacking or that results have been inconsistent. Some studies, such as an October 2012 report published by researchers at Brock University in Canada, found that there was a connection between playing violent video games and an increase in hostile behavior. Over a period of four school years, the researchers found that those children who played violent video games over a long period of time were more likely to react aggressively to unintentional provocations than those who did not play these games. Clearly, there is a need to better understand this link.

Another report in the Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media examined the level of violence in popular video games. The results showed that violence depicted in video games rated for teens and adults was prevalent and that this poses a risk to youths who may develop a tendency to rely on aggressive behavior to solve social problems.

SB 260 would accomplish this goal by creating a task force to explore and identify potential links between violent video games and violent behavior in youths. This would allow for legislators to better understand and improve our public policy on this critically important issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

L. Scott Frantz
State Senator – 36th District