

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 960 Session of
1999

INTRODUCED BY WAGNER, MURPHY, CONTI, STOUT, BODACK, COSTA,
STAPLETON, BELL, TOMLINSON, BOSCOLA, KITCHEN, MOWERY,
TARTAGLIONE AND GREENLEAF, MAY 10, 1999

REFERRED TO JUDICIARY, MAY 10, 1999

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, providing for the offense of selling
3 or furnishing violent interactive video games to minors.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
7 Statutes is amended by adding a chapter to read:

8 CHAPTER 64

9 INTERACTIVE VIDEO GAMES

10 Sec.

11 6401. Short title of chapter.

12 6402. Legislative findings.

13 6403. Selling or furnishing interactive violent video games to
14 minors.

15 § 6401. Short title of chapter.

16 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the Violent
17 Video Game Protection Act.

18 § 6402. Legislative findings.

1 The General Assembly hereby finds and declares as follows:

2 (1) Within the last ten years the video game market,
3 particularly the use of home video game systems, has exploded
4 throughout this Commonwealth and the nation.

5 (2) Video games are available to children not only at
6 traditional places of business specializing in amusement but
7 also through a variety of retail outlets and magazine sales
8 for home use and by communication on the Internet.

9 (3) Improvements to the picture, speed and resolution of
10 the new age of video games have made the depiction of
11 characters, places and events contained in the games
12 amazingly realistic.

13 (4) Some, but not all, video games contain graphic and
14 repeated scenes of violence which include decapitation,
15 bloodshed, dismemberment, killing and death by the use of
16 lethal weapons or hand-to-hand combat.

17 (5) The General Assembly recognizes that violent crime
18 is a serious and persistent problem in our society,
19 especially among our youth.

20 (6) The General Assembly further recognizes that, as
21 confirmed by current scientific data, the repeated exposure
22 to graphic violence and participation in violent interactive
23 games may contribute to violent behavior by our youth and
24 desensitizes them to acts of violence.

25 (7) Information regarding the content of graphic
26 violence contained in movies and television programs as well
27 as information regarding the lyrics of music is provided to
28 consumers and parents so that they may make choices
29 concerning the depiction of violence and whether they elect
30 to have their children exposed to such content.

1 § 6403. Selling or furnishing interactive violent video games
2 to minors.

3 (a) Offense defined.--A person commits a summary offense if
4 the person sells, rents or otherwise provides for use for a
5 charge any video game to a minor which contains scenes or
6 depictions of graphic violence as determined by the
7 Entertainment Software Rating Board. A person commits a
8 misdemeanor of the third degree for a second or subsequent
9 violation of this subsection.

10 (b) Required listings.--Any person or business offering any
11 video game or computer game for sale, loan or use must make
12 available the most recent listings of the Entertainment Software
13 Rating Board for the inspection and review by any potential
14 purchaser, user or transferee of such video or computer game.
15 Failure to make such information available shall constitute a
16 summary offense for a first offense and a misdemeanor of the
17 third degree for a second or subsequent violation of this
18 subsection.

19 (c) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following
20 words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this
21 subsection:

22 "Entertainment Software Rating Board." The independent
23 rating system established by the Interactive Digital Software
24 Association developed to provide consumer information regarding
25 the content of video and computer software games and which may
26 be found on the Internet at the Entertainment Software Rating
27 Board World Wide Web site.

28 "Graphic violence." Includes, but is not limited to,
29 depictions of:

30 (1) Decapitation.

1 (2) Bloodshedding.

2 (3) Dismemberment.

3 (4) Grotesque cruelty.

4 "Minor." Any person under 18 years of age.

5 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.