
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 822 Session of
2003

INTRODUCED BY WAGNER, LOGAN, TARTAGLIONE, COSTA, MUSTO, ORIE,
RAFFERTY, MOWERY, WONDERLING AND RHOADES, JUNE 17, 2003

REFERRED TO JUDICIARY, JUNE 17, 2003

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 video or computer games to minors.

4 The General Assembly hereby finds and declares as follows:

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

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

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

16 (4) Some, but not all, video games contain graphic and
17 repeated scenes of violence which include decapitation,
18 bloodshed, dismemberment, killing and death by the use of

1 lethal weapons or hand-to-hand combat.

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

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

10 (7) Information regarding the content of graphic
11 violence contained in movies and television programs as well
12 as information regarding the lyrics of music is provided to
13 consumers and parents so that they may make choices
14 concerning the depiction of violence and whether they elect
15 to have their children exposed to such content.

16 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
17 hereby enacts as follows:

18 Section 1. Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
19 Statutes is amended by adding a section to read:

20 § 6321. Selling or furnishing violent video or computer games
21 to minors.

22 (a) Offense defined.--A person commits a summary offense if
23 the person sells, rents or otherwise provides for use for a
24 charge any violent video or computer game to a minor. A person
25 commits a misdemeanor of the third degree for a second or
26 subsequent violation of this subsection.

27 (b) Required listings.--A person or business offering any
28 video game or computer game for sale, loan or use shall make
29 available the most recent listings of the Entertainment Software
30 Rating Board for the inspection and review by any potential

purchaser, user or transferee of such video or computer game.
Failure to make such information available shall constitute a
summary offense for a first offense and a misdemeanor of the
third degree for a second or subsequent violation of this
subsection.

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

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

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

"Violent video or computer game." A video or computer game
that contains realistic or photograph-like depictions of
aggressive conflict in which the player kills, injures or
otherwise causes physical harm to a human form.

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