



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

July 20, 2024

Today, I allowed Senate Bill 187 to lapse into law.

This legislation makes technical and definitional changes to the Child Internet Protection Act (Act 197 of 2004). Specifically, the legislation replaces the term “child pornography” with the term “child sexual abuse material.” The legislation defines “child sexual abuse material” in the same manner as the term appears in Title 18 Pa.C.S. Section 6312. However, there is no definition of “child sexual abuse material” contained in 18 Pa.C.S. §6312.

Senate Bill 187 was originally introduced as a companion bill to Senate Bill 186. That legislation amends 18 Pa.C.S. §6312 to include a definition of “child sexual abuse material.” Unfortunately, Senate Bill 186 has not yet passed the General Assembly nor does the definition appear in other legislation which was sent for my signature.

The provisions of Senate Bill 187 will become effective on September 17, 2024. Once effective, school districts and public libraries will no longer be required to maintain acceptable internet use policies that shield against “child pornography,” and instead will be required to shield against “child sexual abuse material.” As there is effectively no statutory definition of “child sexual abuse material,” school boards and public libraries will have discretion to interpret that term as it applies to their acceptable internet use policies. While the General Assembly works to correct the technical defect, I urge school districts and public libraries to maintain the status quo and continue enforcing their existing internet acceptable use policies.

I fully support the intent of Senate Bill 187, which is why I am allowing it to lapse into law. However, due to the bill’s technical defect I cannot attach my signature. I urge the General Assembly to promptly address this deficiency when it returns to session in September and pass legislation adding a definition of “child sexual abuse material” to 18 Pa.C.S. §6312.

Respectfully,

Governor Josh Shapiro