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[Massachusetts Wants to Treat Games as Porn](#)

Bill unlikely to pass

There have been a lot of bills recently in the United States aimed at limiting the access that kids have to videogames. Most of them apparently co-authored by infamous lawyer [Jack Thompson](#), best known for his activities against the GTA franchise. A law enacted in Minnesota requires children under 17 years of age who buy games rated M to face a fine of 25 \$. Yesterday, an appeals court has decided that the law is unconstitutional as it limits free speech and that any measure restricting sales should target the vendors and not the buyers. As early as 2006, the law was declared as unconstitutional, but the state of Minnesota legislature pursued another appeal process, sinking money and resources into limiting access to videogames. Today, the Massachusetts legislature is poised to vote on a bill regarding the sale of videogames. The bill, known as House Bill 1423, aims to establish a situation in which games will be treated as [porn](#) by the sellers. What this means is that games will not be displayed in the front windows of shops and that sales to minors will be restricted on the basis that the violence in games is just as harmful to minors as the display of sexual content in pornographic products. It's fairly obvious that the creators of the bill are grasping at straws as their motivations are trivial. No study that directly links violence in kids and [violence in games](#) is cited and there's no mention on the research conducted on the subject of harm done to minors by exposure to videogames. The wording of the bill is hilarious at certain points. One of the main arguments is that videogames lack "serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value for minors" and therefore minors should not have unrestricted access to them. I would challenge the Massachusetts legislature to turn on the TV, watch prime time for a week and start banning TV shows based on the rationale mentioned above. If such a bill passed the legislature, it would require the signature of the governor to go into effect. But passing a bill and enforcing it are very different things. It might prove a challenge to monitor all the game vendors and regulate their activity. But it seems unlikely that the bill will get a majority of votes. And if it does, it's probably going to be taken down by a judge for constitutional infringement. The bill itself is not what is worrying here, but rather the fact that there are people who are less concerned with educating people about games and creating a positive games culture, and more concerned with banning access to games. We truly never got over Prohibition.