



PORNOGRAPHY

Social Criteria Investment Screen

AUTHORITY

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has expressed its distress about the damage done personally and socially by the impact of pornography and the related practices of commercial sexual exploitation. This issue is addressed in several of the church's social teaching documents: the 2009 social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift & Trust*, the 2001 social message "Commercial Sexual Exploitation" and the 2003 social statement *Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor*. Social teaching on gender-based violence and gender justice also emphasizes that pornography used to demean people on the basis of gender is a form of violence.

WORDING OF SCREEN

The ELCA recommends no investment in firms involved in the production, marketing or distribution of pornography and in related practices such as strip clubs.

DEFINITION OF PROBLEM

In "[Commercial Sexual Exploitation](#)," the ELCA holds that "sexual exploitation in any situation, either personally or commercially, inside or outside legally contracted marriage, is sinful because it is destructive of God's good gift [of sexuality] and human integrity" (p. 1). In particular the social message identifies as harmful commercial sexual exploitation exercised in forms such as pornographic magazines and videos, sex tourism, strip clubs, escort services, the internet, or other means that degrade all participants, both providers and customers (p. 1). As indicated in [Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust](#), "The possibility of profit is not a sufficient moral basis to use human sexuality for purposes that harm individuals or undermine social trust" (p. 34). ELCA social teaching also indicates that Christian social responsibility includes monitoring how economic forces harm or support healthy individual choices and social structures.

Various investors will implement this along a continuum, but for the purpose of this screen, commercial pornography might include those companies manufacturing pornography or other products of the sex industry and those companies selling, promoting and marketing in this industry. It also includes other corporations deriving profit from pornography. These might include distribution networks (internet service providers and social media sites, television, movies/videos, hotel

Corporate Social Responsibility in the ELCA uses the tools of screening of investments, shareholder advocacy and community investing to work with corporations, calling them to ensure that people are treated fairly and with dignity and to create sustainable communities.

More at ELCA.org/CSR.

chains, etc.), the financial infrastructure that facilitates pornography (such as crypto currency) and industries touched by sex trafficking.

SOCIAL POLICY AND STUDIES

[Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor](#) (ELCA, 2003)

[Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust](#) (ELCA, 2009)

[“Commercial Sexual Exploitation”](#) (ELCA, 2001)

[Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action](#) (ELCA, 2019)

[“Gender-based Violence”](#) (ELCA, 2015)

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

“The Victims of Pornography” (ALC, 1985)

“Pornography” (ALC, 1974)

APPROVED by ELCA
Church Council, April 21-
23, 1990

UPDATED by Advisory
Committee on Corporate
Social Responsibility, Sept.
8, 2006

APPROVED by ELCA
Church Council,
November 2007
[CC07.11.95b]

APPROVED by Church
Council, November 2013
[CC13.11.69y]

UPDATED by Corporate
Social Responsibility
Review Team, June 8, 2020

APPROVED by Church
Council, November 2020
[CC20.11.33h]