

Press release

Mormon defamation league seeks to drive through its anti-porn legislation by attacking a well-known neuroscientist Nicole Prause

Mormon activist legislator Todd Weiler sponsored the resolution declaring "porn" a "public health hazard" in Utah with the stated intention of driving future research dollars. History appears to be repeating itself. The Meese Report (1986) on pornography also purported to be a scientific document, but is now recognized as religious propaganda long relegated to the bin of pseudoscience. On August 31, Senator Weiler decided to defame neuroscientist Nicole Prause, PhD, who revealed the pseudoscience in his resolution with four other neuroscientists in multiple, peer-reviewed journal publications.

On KKAT 860 AM radio's weekend program "Middle Grounders" in Salt Lake City, guest Joe Rawlins confronted Senator Weiler with Dr. Prause and colleagues' 2015 study. Senator Weiler responded that Prause was an "outspoken liberal" UCLA neuroscientist who was "funded by the pornography industry".

"I have never received funding from any pornography organization, that study was not funded by porn, nor do I have plans to solicit any pornography funds. None of the four other neuroscientist co-authors on that study have funding from porn. UCLA provided documentation to anti-porn attorney Todd Love's Freedom of Information Act request with UCLA months ago. My salary was 100% from the Annenberg Foundation. The paper itself included a financial disclosures section. Activist Senator Weiler has defamed me to push a religious political agenda", said Prause.

Senator Weiler\*\*\* cited LDS "UCLA colleague" and "neuroscientist" also studying sex films, which only describes Rory Reid, as his source of the information. Rawlins agreed "When I read Rory Reid's bio and work, I strongly suspected that he is the unnamed source." Unbeknownst to Senator Weiler, Reid had contacted the Senator likely seeking retribution against a whistleblower: Dr. Prause had turned Rory Reid in to UCLA for using fake titles in 2014.

"Psychologist" and "LCSW" are both regulated titles licensed with the state of California that Rory Reid was using to advertise his services to patients but did not actually possess. Rory Reid also has falsely described that he attended and is on faculty at Harvard University and is an "assistant professor" at UCLA. Reid was never faculty at Harvard University and is an adjunct, not tenure track faculty, at UCLA. Reid is listed as a full-time employee of the State of California's Office of Problem Gambling at UCLA, so it is unclear how Reid would be able to study sex films and contact politicians about sex films without violating his state contract.

"I have spent over \$7,000 on cease and desist letters for years fighting this slander. Senator Weiler is a source of this defamation and should take responsibility", said Dr. Prause.

Another neuroscientist reported similar experiences with Rory Reid. "He certainly is not a neuroscientist. I also have seen his fake claims of attending Harvard and being a licensed Psychologist.", she^ stated.

The Utah bill appears filled with similar Mormon pseudo-experts. One LDS neurosurgeon often mentioned, Donald Hilton, actually is a practitioner publishing anti-pornography books, not a neuroscientist. Both Hilton and Reid publish their anti-porn books with Deseret Book. Deseret is a subsidiary of Deseret Management Corp, which is owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints or Mormon Church.

At a Citizens for Decency meeting in Pocatello, ID, Hilton had presented data on a supposed "porn addict" actually from a study of pedophilia. Dr. Prause, a tenure-track faculty member in the area at the time, called attention to this false representation at the meeting she attended with her doctoral student. Hilton responded that she must "enjoy molesting children" because she cited data from The Kinsey Institute in her critique. Hilton later continued to lash out, writing a non-peer-reviewed letter to the editor in response to their Steele et al. (2013) peer-reviewed study. The letter raised no actual scientific issues, so the Steel et al. (2013) authors declined the journal's offer to respond to it. Weiler relied on Donald Hilton for the claimed "neuroscience" he describes as supporting his resolution.

Mr. Rawlins, the other guest on the radio show, lamented "It doesn't surprise me that Dr. Prause was retaliated against and insulted by Sen. Weiler or Dr. Hilton or other Mormon zealots online or in person as even I have been accused of being a pornography addict and "a vile apostate" by LDS people who have admitted to me that they or their loved ones were made to believe that they are pornography addicts."

UCLA does not take positions on the research of their scientists. UCLA Dean Jonathan Hiatt supported that Dr. Prause was promoted at UCLA to Associate Research Scientist in 2014 and parted with UCLA to start her own company in 2015, "not because of any issues related to her performance".

Weiler, Reid, and Hilton appear to represent an aggressive, fringe group of LDS activists. The Brigham Young University Counseling and Psychological Services program, for example, has long rejected "addiction" model. Dr. Bruxton of BYU described "we treat it as a compulsive or developmental concern...they feel uncomfortable because they get shamed by their culture". Rawlins adds, "I have interviewed two progressive Mormon sex therapists who both have stated on the record that pornography is not addictive and that convincing people that it is addictive needs to stop."

LDS group Fight The New Drug partners with non-LDS to threaten scientist safety  
Some Mormon ideologues in the blogosphere have perpetuated the harassment and defamation of this particular scientist. Dr. Prause has long been the target of retaliatory harassment following her publication with her colleagues that debunked a core tenet of sex films as "addicting".

Her name appears over 1,350 times on one website alone of an obsessed blogger\*\* (and 134 times on the website owned by his wife\*). He wrote the UCLA chancellor over a dozen times claiming Prause had faked her data, faked her title, and more, all of which UCLA refuted. He also broke into her private online account to stalk her after receiving a no-contact order. He stole her personal photos from that account\*\*\*, posted them to his porn website, then migrated them to try to evade DMCA take downs until his ISP threatened to shutter his website. Dr. Prause had to file a police report and close and hide her UCLA laboratory under threat from this blogger and now requires physical protection at all her public talks from him. He has since been spotted in Los Angeles near the scientist's home and LAPD threat management has been alerted. The LDS, anti-porn organization Fight The New Drug recently posted libel from this blogger and repeated Weiler's defamation that Dr. Prause is funded by pornography on Twitter.

"The anti-porn attacks, intimidation, and intentional misinformation have been incredible," said Dr. Prause, "but it is great inspiration to continue publishing strong science."

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Nicole Prause, PhD is a neuroscientist and statistician who studies human sexual motivation. She founded Liberos LLC ([www.liberoscenter.com](http://www.liberoscenter.com)), which is funded entirely through non-profit research grants. She recently discussed the anti-porn attacks with PBS Nova's Secret Lives of Scientists(<http://www.pbs.org/video/2365805698/>).