

# Supreme Court to decide if kids can buy violent video games

April 26 2010

---

The US Supreme Court on Monday agreed to consider whether a California ban on the sale of violent video games to minors is unconstitutional.

In 2005, California approved a law banning the sale and rental of [violent video games](#) to children under the age of 18, and ordered game makers to post explicit warnings on such games.

The law was quickly challenged, and was overturned by a lower federal court and again on appeal in February 2009 on grounds that it restricted freedom of expression.

California Governor [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#) has now appealed the case to the [Supreme Court](#), which next month will take up the case, known as "Schwarzenegger v. Entertainment Merchants Association."

The law defines a violent video game as one that depicts "killing, maiming, dismembering, or sexually assaulting an image of a human being," though it does not prevent a parent or guardian from purchasing the game for their child.

In their submission to the court, attorneys for the state of California said the ban was based on medical and sociological studies that "establish a correlation between violent video game play and increased automatic aggressiveness, [aggressive thoughts](#) and behavior, antisocial behavior, and desensitization to violence in minors and adults."

At least nine other states and localities have enacted similar restrictions, including Washington, Minnesota and Illinois. In California, retailers are subject to 1,000 dollars in fines for each violation.

The Video Software Dealers Association, which brought the case before the Supreme Court, argues that minors should have the same access to potentially violent video games as they currently do to movies or books with similarly graphic content.

The closely watched free-speech case is expected to be among the first heard by the newest Supreme Court justice who is expected to join the court by the start of the new term in October, replacing retiring Justice John Paul Stevens.

Earlier this month, the Supreme Court cited free speech protections in overturning a law banning images of animal cruelty, reversing a sentence against a man who sold videos of pitbull dog fights that he had not himself organized.

(c) 2010 AFP

Citation: Supreme Court to decide if kids can buy violent video games (2010, April 26) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-04-supreme-court-kids-violent-video.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.