



#HALF
THE
STORY



April 3, 2023

The Honorable Tom Umberg
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SUPPORT FOR SB 287 (Skinner) Social Media Platform Liability

Dear Chair Umberg:

The Coalition to Protect California Kids Online supports SB 287, which holds social media platforms liable for knowingly or willfully addicting children and causing eating disorders, child suicides, fentanyl overdoses, and more.

SB 287 is an urgently needed measure that will provide a clear path for parents and children to hold social media giants accountable. This bill would hold companies financially responsible for certain harms they know they are causing to our children through their failure to act with basic care in their operations. With an important focus on prevention, the bill will also motivate the platforms to audit their practices for child harm and promptly fix harmful practices.

America has an unprecedented child mental health crisis pre-dating COVID and there is [growing concern among experts on the impact of social media use](#). During the time that Instagram use rose from 1 million users to 1 billion, [suicide among girls years 10 to 14 doubled](#). The cause-and-effect relationship between at least part of this unprecedented crisis and the parallel rise in social media use was confirmed by [Facebook's internal research](#):

- “Among teen users [of Instagram] who reported suicidal thoughts... 6% of American [teen] users traced the desire to kill themselves to Instagram.”
- “Teens blame Instagram for increases in the rate of anxiety and depression.”

SB 287 offers these handful of multi-billion dollar corporations a specified financial incentive not to make business decisions they know or should know will hurt children. The bill provides an off-ramp from such liability if companies do what they should be doing anyway – auditing their practices and fixing what is harmful to children.

This bill strikes the right balance between the need to protect children and the ability of platforms to operate effectively with child well being in mind. If this bill became law, children and teens would have great control over what they see and be free from involuntary addiction, the sale of fentanyl-laced pills, pro-eating disorder and suicide content, and dangerous choking challenges.

We respectfully request your “Aye” vote on SB 287.

Sincerely,

Kami Peer, State Policy Associate
Common Sense Media

Ed Howard, Senior Counsel
Children's Advocacy Institute

Larissa May, Founder
#HalfTheStory

Kathi Harper, Public Policy Chair
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