



April 18, 2023

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 287 (Skinner) Social Media Platform Liability - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Portantino,

Common Sense supports SB 287 (Skinner), which holds social media platforms accountable to parents and children for knowingly or willfully addicting children and causing eating disorders, child suicides, fentanyl overdoses, or other harms.

We are in the midst of an unprecedented and exploding youth mental health crisis that researchers, clinicians, and whistleblowers attribute in significant part to social media. Kids are spending more time on social media, many of them on for [over two hours every day for each platform](#).

While social media use is not inherently a bad thing for kids and teens, there are alarming – and in some cases deadly – threats lurking on the social media platforms. During the time that Instagram use rose from 1 million users to 1 billion, [suicide among girls age 10 to 14 doubled](#). Among American teens who reported suicidal thoughts, [6% of users traced the desire to kill themselves to Instagram](#). TikTok has pushed harmful content [promoting eating disorders and self-harm to young users](#); every 39 seconds, TikTok recommended such videos about body image and mental health to teens. [Fentanyl was the cause of 77.14% of drug deaths among teens in 2021](#), and, according to one California DA, "Social media is almost exclusively the way they get the pills."

These are a few of the tragic impacts that problematic algorithms or artificial intelligence are having on child users. SB 287 addresses these known problems on platforms through prevention: companies that distribute harmful content are penalized and companies that regularly audit their practices for unlawfully harmful conduct and then fix all identified problems, are immunized from liability.

Common Sense strongly supports policies and programs that hold tech companies accountable for their impact on kids' mental health and overall well-being. We believe these social media companies need to stop putting profits over the lives of our children and teens. For the above reasons, we respectfully request your "Aye" vote on SB 287.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kami Peer".

Kami Peer
State Policy Associate, Common Sense Media