



#HALF  
THE  
STORY



June 16, 2023

The Honorable Brian Maienschein,  
Chair, Assembly Judiciary Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 104  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SUPPORT FOR SB 680 (Skinner) Social Media Platform Liability

Dear Chair Maienschein:

The Coalition to Protect California Kids Online supports SB 680, which holds social media platforms liable for utilizing platform designs, algorithms, or features that the company knows, or should have known, cause child users (i) to inflict harm on themselves or others; (ii) to develop an eating disorder; and (iii) to experience addiction to the platform. This is a strengthening of previous efforts to regulate harmful platform features by including causation requirements that are more robust and enforceable.

SB 680 is an urgently needed measure that will provide a clear path for parents and caregivers to hold social media giants accountable for harms to their children through litigation brought by the Attorney General or other public prosecutors. This bill would hold companies financially responsible for certain harms they know or should know they are causing to children through their failure to act with basic care in their operations. With an important focus on prevention, the bill would also motivate platforms by relieving them of financial liability if they promptly audit and fix their practices.

America has an unprecedented youth mental health crisis pre-dating COVID and there is [growing concern among experts about 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.”

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 greater control over what they see or don't see related to self-harm, disordered eating, suicide, obtaining controlled substances, and other growing harms.

We respectfully request your “Aye” vote on SB 680.

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  
AAUW CA

Jeff Weiner, Director of Public Policy  
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