



March 14, 2023

California State Assembly Committee on Education
Attn: Chair Al Muratsuchi
Legislative Office Building
1020 N Street, Room 159
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 787 (Gabriel) - Pupil instruction: digital citizenship and media literacy: survey. (Support)

Dear Chair Muratsuchi:

On behalf of the Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA), I write to support AB 787 (Gabriel).

CCIA is a 50-year-old not-for-profit international tech trade association that advocates for policy and market conditions that benefit innovation, the tech sector, and consumers.¹ We strongly believe children deserve an enhanced level of security and privacy online. Currently, there are a number of efforts among our members to incorporate protective design features into their websites and platforms. CCIA's members have been leading the effort in raising the standard for teen safety and privacy across the tech industry by creating new features, settings, parental tools, and protections that are age-appropriate and tailored to the differing developmental needs of young people.

Given the complexity of tackling this critical issue, existing industry efforts to support child safety and privacy online could be bolstered by educational curricula focused on how to be a good citizen online. Offering such education to children would provide a more holistic approach to fostering children's online safety. Specifically, we laud the efforts to identify standards of appropriate, responsible, and healthy online behavior, including cyberbullying prevention and response, understanding digital footprints, civil online discourse, and online safety.² Enabling young people to properly identify and respond to such behavior would promote safer online habits and may serve as a deterrent to engaging in such activities.

The use of online services, whether for personal or educational purposes, is part of everyday life for many young people. The Child Mind Institute, which develops and provides educators and school-based mental health professionals with evidence-based prevention and intervention training programs for schools K-12, has expressed that it is possible that removing access to social media and the internet from children may actually have adverse effects.³ Alternatively, many experts recommend that parents help young people learn self-regulation skills and proper online behavior similar to teaching them self-regulation when it comes to other personal habits and choices.

¹ For over 50 years, CCIA has promoted open markets, open systems, and open networks. CCIA members employ more than 1.6 million workers, invest more than \$100 billion in research and development, and contribute trillions of dollars in productivity to the global economy. A list of CCIA members is available at <https://www.ccianet.org/members>.

² See New Jersey's [recently passed law](#) signed by Governor Phil Murphy (D) on January 4, 2023.

³ JoJo Marshall, *When should you come between a teenager and their phone?*, Child Mind Institute (Dec. 19, 2022), <https://childmind.org/article/when-should-you-come-between-a-teenager-and-her-phone/#what-happens-when-you-confiscate-that-phone>



In addition, a study found that social media effects are nuanced,⁴ small at best, reciprocal over time, and gender-specific. Pew Research Center found that teens themselves also paint a nuanced picture of the effects of social media. It is one in which majorities credit these platforms⁵ with deepening connections and providing a support network when they need it. In their recent survey, 80% of teens say that what they see on social media makes them feel more connected to what’s going on in their friends’ lives, while 71% say it makes them feel like they have a place where they can show their creative side. Additionally, 67% also say these platforms make them feel as if they have people who can support them through tough times.

Due to many of the positive impacts social media and online services as a whole have had on connecting with loved ones, education, resources, and much more, it is imperative to educate young people on how to appropriately and effectively navigate these spaces to further facilitate these positive outcomes from internet use while also giving them the tools to protect themselves when negative occurrences arise.

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We appreciate your consideration of these comments and stand ready to provide additional information as California lawmakers consider proposals related to technology policy. Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at kboender@ccianet.org or 203-918-6491.

Sincerely,

Khara Boender
State Policy Director
Computer & Communications Industry Association

CC: Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel
State Capitol
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⁴ Amy Orben et al., *Social Media’s enduring effect on adolescent life satisfaction*, PNAS (May 6, 2019), <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.1902058116>.

⁵ Monica Anderson et al., *Connection, creativity and drama: Teen life on social media in 2022*, Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech (Nov. 17, 2022), <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2022/11/16/connection-creativity-and-drama-teen-life-on-social-media-in-2022/>.