FLOOR ALERT: HB 577 (Carver) - OPPOSE

The Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA) acknowledges policymakers’ valid concerns about the online privacy of young individuals. The business community takes seriously the shared responsibility of incorporating robust protective features in their devices, websites, services, and platforms. Please refer to https://cei.org/children-online-safety-tools/ for a currently available list of tools for parents along with guides for how parents can implement these tools at the device, application, and internet service provider (ISP) level.

CCIA supports the Senate committee amendments removing requirements for app stores to verify users’ age. These amendments preserve the original purpose of the bill – prohibiting covered entities from either selling the personal data of minors or using it for targeted advertising. Many responsible digital services have already invested, developed, and offered various tools and features to provide additional privacy and security controls for younger users. The House’s amended language contradicts HB 577’s original intent as age verification would require the collection and storage of more sensitive data about children, including geolocation.

Age verification solely at the application store level overlooks the fact that users could still access websites via browsers on desktop computers or other devices. Numerous applications are designed for use through a browser, which this method does not cover. While it might seem like a comprehensive solution to regulating access to mature adult content, in reality, it falls short of achieving that goal.

For the above reasons, we urge you to reject amendments to HB 577 to require app stores to conduct age verification.