



**Computer & Communications
Industry Association**
Open Markets. Open Systems. Open Networks.



March 18, 2026

Assembly Committee on Education
California Capitol Building
1315 10th St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1766 - “Health curriculum framework: . . . online safety” (Support)

Dear Chair Patel and Members of the Assembly Committee on Education:

The undersigned organizations write to support AB 1766, an Act relative to health curriculum frameworks and online safety. Our members invest heavily in providing parents with privacy and safety tools and incorporating protective design features into their websites.¹ We strongly support measures to incorporate media and digital literacy into the curriculum for K-12 students, as this education provides a vital resource for children and young adults, helping them understand how to consume media and navigate online spaces in a proper manner.² Multiple states have already instituted such measures, including New Jersey’s H588, enacted in 2023, and Virginia, which enacted HB 2460 last year.³

Digital literacy is widely seen as an essential life skill.

The phrase “digital literacy” has evolved significantly in the past decade. Digital education used to be reserved for knowledge workers — those who might need to fluently use specific software

¹ Competitive Enterprise Institute, *Children Online Safety Tools*, <https://cei.org/children-online-safety-tools/> (last updated June 10, 2025).

² Jordan Rodell, *Why Implementing Education is a Logical Starting Point for Children’s Safety Online*, Disruptive Competition Project (Feb. 7, 2023), <https://www.project-disco.org/privacy/020723-why-implementing-education-is-a-logical-starting-point-for-childrens-safety-online/>.

³ See, e.g., State of N.J., Dep’t of Ed., Student Digital Wellness, <https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/sandp/digital> (implementing N.J. Rev. Stat. § 18A:7F-4.4 (2024)); Va. Dep’t of Ed., Digital Learning Integration Standards of Learning, <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/digital-learning-integration-standards-of-learning> (implementing Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-253.13:1 (2025)).

at work. Today, digital literacy means having the skills to thrive in a society where communication and access to information are increasingly done via digital technologies, such as online services and mobile devices, and AB 1766 would help support the development of such skills.⁴ The demand for digital literacy skills has grown considerably over the past 20 years, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, and is now expected even in roles unrelated to technology.⁵

However, a Pew Research study⁶ shows that Americans still lack basic understanding of digital topics. Most notably, Americans struggle most to answer basic questions correctly about large language models and online privacy. Even more concerning is that those with a high school diploma or less know the least about digital topics such as deepfakes, cookies, or two-factor authentication. Providing digital literacy and online stewardship curricula to teens and young adults is crucial to closing this gap. Just as many high schools provide courses that prepare teens for college and the job market, digital literacy is increasingly important for the ever-growing number of jobs in the digital economy.

Boston Children’s Digital Wellness Lab acknowledges that it is critical to help kids learn to navigate digital spaces on their own, especially knowing that it is impossible to monitor their online activity 24/7.⁷ Social-emotional skills like empathy, kindness, and personal responsibility, which are indeed crucial for offline interactions, can also be taught to enhance online interactions. Even for younger children, character education through digital citizenship is gaining traction in practice. According to a study on school children in the United States, 62% of K-2 teachers and 69% of grade 3-5 teachers report using some digital citizenship curriculum, with competencies related to developing positive character features being most common, such as understanding “digital drama” and hate speech.⁸

Online services, whether for personal or educational purposes, are part of everyday life for many young people.

The Child Mind Institute, which develops evidence-based prevention and intervention training programs for K-12 school educators and mental health professionals, has found evidence that removing access to social media and the internet from children may actually have adverse

⁴ Alex Christian, *Why “digital literacy” is now a workplace non-negotiable*, BBC Worklife (Sept. 26, 2022), <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20220923-why-digital-literacy-is-now-a-workplace-non-negotiable>.

⁵ Alec Tyson et al., *How COVID-19 impacted Americans’ relationship with technology*, Pew Res. Ctr. (Feb. 12, 2025), <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2025/02/12/how-covid-19-impacted-americans-relationship-with-technology/>; German Neubaum et al., *A Pandemic for the Good of Digital Literacy? An Empirical Investigation of Newly Improved Digital Skills during COVID-19 Lockdowns*, CHI '25: Proceedings of the 2025 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (Apr. 25, 2025), <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3706598.3713148>.

⁶ Olivia Sidoti & Emily Vogels, *What Americans Know About AI, Cybersecurity and Big Tech*, Pew Res. Ctr. (Aug. 17, 2023), <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2023/08/17/what-americans-know-about-ai-cybersecurity-and-big-tech/>.

⁷ Elizabeth Hunt, *Research brief: Digital Citizenship and Media Literacy*, The Digital Wellness Lab, <https://digitalwellnesslab.org/research-briefs/digital-citizenship-and-media-literacy/> (June 2023).

⁸ Alexis Lauricella, Jenna Herdzina, Michael Robb, *Early childhood educators’ teaching of Digital Citizenship Competencies*, *Computers & Education* (Dec. 2020), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0360131520301871>.

effects.⁹ Alternatively, many experts recommend that parents help young people learn self-regulation skills and proper online behavior similar to teaching them self-regulation in other circumstances. In this environment, it is crucial to develop “foundational digital citizenship skills that equip pupils to respond safely when exposed to harmful or uncomfortable online content” including “how to stay safe from sexually exploitative materials and deepfakes online,” “understanding online exploitation,” and other “online safety skills”, as AB 1766 does.

Digital citizenship curricula can bolster existing industry efforts to support child safety and privacy online.

Existing industry efforts coupled with educational curricula focused on how to be a good citizen online can have positive impacts.¹⁰ Offering children such education would provide a more holistic approach to children’s online safety. Enabling young people to properly identify and respond to problematic behavior promotes safer online habits and may serve as a deterrent to engaging in concerning activities.

Due to the many 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. Such education will facilitate these positive outcomes from internet use while also giving children the tools to protect themselves when negative occurrences arise.

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We appreciate the Committee’s consideration of these comments and stand ready to provide additional information as the Legislature considers proposals related to technology policy.

Sincerely,



Aodhan Downey
State Policy Manager, West Region
Computer & Communications Industry Association

⁹ 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>.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Google’s *Be Internet Awesome* digital citizenship and internet safety curriculum guides, https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_us/; Or. Dep’t of Ed., *Digital Civics, Digital Citizenship, & Internet Safety*, <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/teachingcontent/pages/digital-civics-digital-citizenship-&-internet-safety.aspx>.

On behalf of:

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California Chamber of Commerce, Ronak Daylami

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jake Lestock', with a large, stylized initial 'J' and a long horizontal flourish.

CTIA - The Wireless Association, Jake Lestock

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H Fienberg', with a large, stylized initial 'H' and a long horizontal flourish.

Insights Association, Howard Fienberg

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jose Torres', with a large, stylized initial 'J' and a long horizontal flourish.

TechNet, Jose Torres