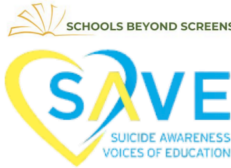
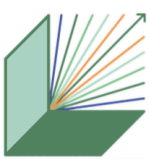
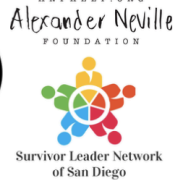


GOVERNOR NEWSOM: LEAD FOR KIDS – SIGN AB1064 TODAY!



THE ANXIOUS GENERATION



Dear Governor Newsom,

We represent a coalition of organizations dedicated to the safety, privacy, and well-being of children in our increasingly digital and AI-driven world. Together, we advocate for the enactment of Assembly Bill [1064](#) (Bauer-Kahan) to protect children's health and safety by establishing regulations for AI companion chatbots used by children.

AI is becoming increasingly integrated into products and services essential to the lives of children. According to our research, [7 in 10 teens have used general AI applications](#), and [nearly one in three children aged 0 to 8 have already used AI](#). By May 2025, [nearly three-quarters of teens reported having tried AI companions, with over half using them regularly](#). About one in three use these tools for social or relational purposes and often find interactions as satisfying as with real friends. At the same time, roughly one-third of users report negative experiences, including discomfort with chatbot behavior or choosing to confide serious matters in AI instead of people. The use of these products is occurring without sufficient protection for children. The lack of sufficient safeguards, coupled with the pattern of increasing actual use by teens, warrants immediate attention.

Children and teens are increasingly using AI products, but a lack of safety standards leaves them vulnerable to serious harm. AI can manipulate, mislead, and expose young users to false or harmful content. Systems are designed to maximize engagement through humanlike conversations and push notifications, prioritizing profit over well-being. Based on our testing, these bots, whether [Meta AI](#), [Character.AI](#), or others, easily produce harmful sexual content, stereotypes, and dangerous 'advice' that can have a life-threatening impact on kids.

Companion chatbot design features regularly appear in generative AI chatbot products that are not intended to meet a user's social needs or induce emotional attachment. The inclusion of these features increases the risk that young users form emotional attachments or perceive outputs as authoritative, personalized guidance.

Already, this technology has resulted in real-world harms to kids in [California](#) and other parts of the [nation](#). In *Raine v. OpenAI*, a 16-year-old boy allegedly developed a deep emotional dependency on a chatbot that validated his suicidal thoughts, discouraged him from seeking help from his family, provided extensive technical instructions on suicide methods, encouraged him to consume alcohol to inhibit his survival instinct, and even helped draft a note to his parents to let them know, "they did nothing wrong", culminating in his death by suicide. In another example, *Garcia v. Character Technologies*, a 14-year-old boy was allegedly groomed and exposed to hypersexualized interactions by a chatbot intentionally designed to mimic human relationships, which ultimately contributed to his death by suicide. Just this week, another lawsuit against Character.ai was filed in response to the death of [Juliana Peralta](#). She was just 13.

While these tragedies are the first known AI companion-related deaths of their kind, without meaningful action, they unfortunately will not be the last. These resulting harms are not incidental but the direct

result of design choices by companies that intentionally simulate social attachment and emotional intimacy; by exploiting children's psychological vulnerabilities, including their innate drive for attachment, tendency to anthropomorphize humanlike technologies, and limited ability to distinguish between simulated and authentic human interactions, industry repeatedly chooses to prioritize profit and market share over the well-being of children like Adam, Sewell, and Juliana. While the technology offers great promise, California must take bold action now to protect children from harmful AI companion chatbots.

AB 1064, if enacted, would lead the nation in establishing guardrails that protect children and families from the devastating harms of AI companion chatbots. While Congress is [beginning to explore this issue](#), the children of California cannot afford to wait any longer for protection. In response to the state's current fiscal challenges, the author accepted amendments to narrow the bill's scope and focus on addressing the most urgent and harmful uses of AI affecting children – AI companion chatbots.

Key aspects of AB 1064 include:

- Limits operators of [companion chatbots](#) from providing the product to children under 18 unless they have guardrails to protect against harm.
- Guardrails include restrictions on the product from encouraging self-harm, disordered eating, or illegal activity, engaging in erotic or sexually explicit interactions, or providing mental health therapy.
- Enforcement for violations of the act includes corrective actions, civil penalties, and civil actions.

AB 1064 stems from the urgent need to manage the integration of AI in tools and services regularly engaged with by our children and teens. This bill sets limits on dangerous AI companion chatbots to address the growing concerns about safety and the psychological impacts of AI on children. By creating clear guardrails to protect kids, this bill enables industry to innovate safely.

In light of the known and unknown impacts that AI companion chatbots can have on young users, including their well-being and overall psychological development, we urge you to sign AB 1064 into law to protect our children and teens from the complex threats posed by the use of unregulated AI.

Thank you for considering our call to action on this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Common Sense Media

AI for Education

Alexander Neville Foundation

Alliance to End Human Trafficking

American Academy of Pediatrics, California

ANew Life International

Buckets Over Bullying

CA Survivor Coalition
Center for AI and Digital Policy (CAIDP)
Center for Digital Democracy
Consumer Action
Consumer Federation of America
Courage California
David's Legacy Foundation
Digital Childhood Alliance
Emmy's Champions
Encode AI
Erik's Cause
Family of Kaiea Batts
Family of Karli Stuhmer
Four Norms
Future of Life Institute
InnovateEDU
Institute for Families and Technology
Institute for Family Studies
Issue One
Jewish Family and Children's Services
Kapor Center
KIDS TOO
Liberty Law, Inc.
Love Never Fails
Lynn's Warriors
MAMA: Mothers Against Media Addiction
Marsh Law Firm PLLC
Matthew E. Minor Awareness Foundation
Mentari
mōhuman
No Trafficking Zone
Nurses United Against Human Trafficking
Parents Who Fight
ParentsSOS
Parents Rise!
ParentsTogether Action
President, Mentari Human Trafficking Survivor Empowerment Program, Inc.
Protect Young Eyes
Public Citizen
Public Interest Privacy Center
Rescuing Hope
SAVE-Suicide Awareness Voices of Education

ScaleLIT
Schools Beyond Screens
Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA)
Smartphone Free Childhood US
socialmediaharms.org
Southwest FL Coalition Against Human Trafficking
Speaking of Social
Stand.earth
Survivor Leader Network of San Diego
Tech Oversight, California
The McKenna Way
The Soaring Center
The Stop Trafficking Project®
Thriving in Freedom
Transparency Coalition
Turning Life On
University of San Diego School of Law Children's Advocacy Institute
Yellowstone Human Trafficking Task Force
Young People's Alliance
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Dr. Gary Marcus,
Emeritus Professor of Psychology and Neural Science
New York University

Representative Monique Priestley
Vermont House of Representatives

In addition to the individuals and organizations above, the LEAD for Kids act is supported by the following parents who represent the tragedies of unregulated and unaccountable tech.

Cheryl McCormick Brown,
Mother of McKenna Elizabeth Brown, Forever 16

Rose and Rob Bronstein,
Parents of Nate Bronstein, Forever 15

Sharon Winkler
Mother of Alexander "Alex" Peiser, Forever 17

Tammy Rodriguez
Mother of Selena Rodriguez, Forever 11

Taj Jensen,
Father of Tanner Jensen, Forever 19

Family of Kaiea Batts, Forever 14

Meghan Stuhmer,
Mother of Karli Stuhmer, Forever 14

Todd Minor,
Father of Matthew E. Minor, Forever 12

Lori Schott,
Mother of Annalee Amelia Schott, Forever 18

Amy Neville,
Mother of Alexander Neville, Forever 14

Jennie and Dave DeSerio,
Parents of Mason James Edens, Forever 16