



August 13, 2024

Senator Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7620
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Caballero,

As advocates for children, families, and consumers across California, we at Common Sense Media, along with our partners at the California Teachers Association, California School Boards Association, JPAC, and Children's Advocacy Institute, express our unified support for AB 3172 (Lowenthal). We urge your support in advancing this crucial bill from the Senate Appropriations Committee. This legislation is vital for enhancing the well-being and safety of our communities, especially our younger populations.

As Chair of the Committee, you play a critical role in shaping California's fiscal and social landscape. We strongly believe that passing AB 3172 will both meet your responsibilities as Committee Chair and the need of our states' children, teens and families to have stronger online protections online.

The link between the manipulative features of social media platforms and the escalation of mental health issues among our youth — such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and access to illegal substances online — is well-documented and alarming, and yet there are few if any guardrails on social media companies to protect minors. AB 3172 addresses this crisis in a simple yet effective fashion, by introducing statutory damages under California's existing negligence law to directly address harms minors experience through social media when it is proven in court that the companies offered products or design features that resulted in the harm. This bill is a pivotal step toward mitigating real life, but completely avoidable, consequences of social media design features and practices.

AB 3172 entails minimal initial costs, but the projected revenues from settlements and penalties on non-compliant social media companies will exceed these expenses exponentially, ensuring fiscal responsibility. More importantly, this legislation challenges the alarming trend of social media companies prioritizing profit over the well-being of our children.



In response to our efforts, industry representatives have launched a disinformation campaign to undermine AB 3172, making misleading claims about its implications and scope. It is vital to clarify that this bill does not introduce onerous regulations on Big Tech - it doesn't change existing negligence law, except to add these statutory damages. This bill seeks to ensure that social media companies do not profit from practices that harm our youth.

We urge you not to let the tech industry's pursuit of profiting off of children and teens overshadow the critical need to protect young people's mental and emotional health. This moment calls for bold leadership to counteract the industry's narrative and support a bill that stands to protect our most vulnerable population.

Your support for AB 3172 in the Senate Judiciary Committee was instrumental and greatly appreciated, and we look forward to your continued leadership on this crucial legislation.

Warm regards,

James P. Steyer
Founder and CEO
Common Sense Media