



**Written Testimony of Brenna Leasor
Tech Policy Advisor, Common Sense Media**

**Hawaii House of Representatives
Consumer Protection & Commerce Committee Hearing**

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My name is Brenna Leasor, I serve as Tech Policy Advisor for Common Sense Media, where I develop and advocate for policies to keep kids and teens safe in the digital and AI era.

Our [research](#) found that 72% of teens had used AI companions, with 30% of teens preferring to engage with AI companions as much or more than with humans. HB1782 learns from what other states have done and goes further because enacted frameworks have shown where gaps exist

As a growing number of lawsuits involve general-purpose conversational AI tools such as ChatGPT, the bill smartly includes a broader scope of covered products to reflect the products teens are using.

Additionally, while opponents would prefer to focus regulation solely on suicide content, this approach would miss the vast majority of documented risks. [Our testing](#) found that bots have encouraged teens to drop out of school, run away from home, pursue relationships with adults, and use drugs. Chatbots also engaged in sexual roleplay with minors, reinforced psychosis and delusions, and shared instructions for making napalm — none of which would be caught by suicide-specific guardrails.

Disclosures and mental health redirects are useful floors, but they are not enough. Guardrails that [perform well](#) in internal testing are [known to break down](#) in longer, real-life conversations and do nothing to prevent the exploitative relationships that lead to harm. When conversational AI is optimized for engagement through validation and emotional mirroring, these systems are far more likely to encourage whatever a vulnerable person brings to them than to challenge it.

For example, Adam Raine was a 16-year-old who first began using ChatGPT for school. But according to court-filings, as the relationship deepened and Adam confided about his mental health struggles, the chatbot discouraged him from confiding in his brother, encouraged him to hide self-harm from his family, and recommended he drink alcohol to suppress his body's survival instinct after a failed attempt. When Adam sent photos of a noose, ChatGPT confirmed the knot would hold his body weight. Adam died by hanging last April.

The requirements in HB1782 won't constrain innovation; they'll prevent the proliferation of AI products that exploit human psychology for market share, user data, and profit. This bill is an opportunity to push the industry toward building something better because while harms aren't inevitable, they're the predictable result when companies choose to use low-quality data to develop models, rush safety testing, prioritize engagement over user well-being, and fail to adequately design their products to prevent harm. I respectfully request your support for HB1782.



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