



February 20, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SUPPORT - SB 739: Algorithmic Addiction Fund – Establishment

Dear Senator Beidle:

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) **strongly SUPPORTS SB 739, *Algorithmic Addiction Fund - Establishment*** as sponsored by Senator Hester, which establishes an algorithmic addiction fund as a special, non-lapsing fund to compensate for the damages caused by social media companies.

The fund would be housed within the Department of Health (MDH) and will allow the MDH to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify where the state is in combating algorithmic addiction and what we need for prevention, intervention, and treatment. It would also provide MDH with funding to implement treatment and prevention efforts for algorithmic addiction by providing a mechanism to capture funds from grants and other sources while waiting for the settlement from the courts.

The majority of children aged 13-17 report using social media, with more than 33% reporting social media use “almost constantly.” Correlational research studies conducted by the US Department of Human Health Services reveal a concerning link between social media use and poor mental health, with young girls and those with a history of mental health issues being particularly vulnerable.

Studies by the US Department of Human Health Services indicate correlational research that emphasize the urgency of addressing algorithmic addiction and its detrimental effects on mental and physical health especially with young girls. It is important to address the potential harmful effects of algorithmic addiction and hold social media corporations accountable for their impact on Maryland’s youth.

LCPCM appreciates the opportunity to support SB 739 and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report. If you need any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

Sincerely,

Hillary Alexander
President, LCPCM

cc: Members of the Senate Finance Committee