



Senate Bill 844
Consumer Protection - Online Products and Services - Children's Data
Finance Committee
March 8, 2023, 1:00 p.m.
Position: Favorable

The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST), the Maryland Coalition for Community Schools (MD4CS), and MENTOR Maryland DC are statewide organizations dedicated to positive youth development and increasing a broad variety of opportunities for young people both in school and outside of the school day and year.

Within the field of youth development, our leaders and practitioners are painfully aware that young people are now engaging with technology 24/7. Students use technology daily in school to communicate with family and friends, consume entertainment, and often they create their own media. These technology intersections are largely unbound and unfiltered and present great opportunities and great risks.

While it is impossible and likely undesirable to control all aspects of a young person's journey in the digital age, we can offer guardrails that make it less likely they will be exploited and harmed. For this reason, we enthusiastically support Senate Bill 844. Modeled after successful legislation from the United Kingdom, with California and other states following suit, this common-sense legislation requires technology companies to follow best practices and protections that should already be in place around data collection and sharing, privacy settings, and transparency--appropriate by age.

Adults often do not have the necessary information or technological savvy to ensure that settings are implemented to safeguard our children. SB844 will place the onus on the technology companies that have the capability to implement these shields. Maryland should be a leader and early adopter, encouraging other states and the federal government to take similar action. We applaud Senator Kramer for sponsoring SB44 and encourage the committee to provide a favorable report.

Additionally, the Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) joins this testimony (Rick Tyler Co-Chair).

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