



Committee: House Economic Matters Committee

Bill: House Bill 603- Consumer Protection Online Products and Services – Data of Children (Maryland Kids Code)

Hearing Date: February 13, 2024

Position: Support

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) supports *House Bill 603 – Consumer Protection Online Products and Services – Data of Children (Maryland’s Kids Codes)*. The bill recognizes the detrimental impact that social media can have on children. According to the U.S. Surgeon General’s 2023 Social Media and Youth Mental Health Advisoryⁱ, adolescents are more at risk of mental health issues if they use social media more than three hours a day. Young people, particular adolescent girls, are particularly at risk of cyberbullying, leading to depression, anxiety disorders, and even suicidal ideation.

Social media is not necessarily bad for children. It can be a positive tool to increase connection with peers. LCPCM supports this legislation because it will ensure that social media platforms have appropriate guardrails. Platforms must use age-appropriate frameworks in designing their platforms and mitigate the risks from the beginning.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/sg-youth-mental-health-social-media-advisory.pdf>