



Free State PTA
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**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland Senate
Finance Committee for the Hearing on
Consumer Protection - Online Products and Services - Data of Children (Maryland Kids Code) - Senate Bill 571
Feb 14, 2024
SUPPORT**

Free State PTA represents over 70,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is composed of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. ***Senate Bill 571 , Public Schools – Consumer Protection - Online Products and Services - Data of Children (Maryland Kids Code) - aligns with Free State PTA's legislative agenda which states the schools must provide a safe environment where all students, teachers and staff can thrive.***

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 571. 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. SB 571 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 encourage the committee to provide a favorable report for SB571.

Submitted on behalf of

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