

SB571 TESTIMONY

LISA CLINE

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Dear esteemed representatives of Maryland citizens.

Since 2010:

- 1,358 children died from choking challenges found on social media.
- ADHD is up 72% in children 1-18.
- Anorexia is up 100%.
- Substance abuse and addiction has risen 33%.
- Anxiety up 134%.
- Depression is up 106%.
- In 2021, Homeland Security arrested 3,776 predators and rescued 1,177 victims of online child sexual exploitation.

200 school districts are suing social media for making children unavailable to learn.

42 state attorney generals are suing, as well.

Until Section 230 of the Internet Decency Act is repealed, and the courts deem social media a product not a service, big tech will continue to terrorize our children. Maryland must act. And now.

Think of it... When a child chokes on a marble, a massive recall is issued on the offending toy. It is pulled off the shelf that day. Yet when videos are distributed freely teaching children *how* to choke themselves, no action is taken.

New York City mayor Eric Adams declares social media an environmental health hazard.

The U.S. surgeon general says social media is fueling a youth mental health crisis.

Experts say they'd rather give their teens Jack Daniels and joint than social media.

As for data privacy, I co-founded the Student Data Privacy Project to test the integrity of FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. In 13 states, we found that edtech was stealing, storing, and selling kids data without permission and without punishment from the Dept. of Education. 96% of all edtech products tested by the Internet Safety Lab are siphoning kids' data by the terabyte-ful as we speak.

This is a crisis wrapped in an epidemic. 40 bi-partisan federal bills have been introduced to stop social media's manipulative practices. Zero passed.

It's time for the states to act. The Maryland Kids Code won't bring back Carson, 16, who died by suicide after being cyberbullied on Snapchat. Or Mason, 15, who died of asphyxiation after

trying the TikTok choking challenge. Or Becca, 18, who overdosed on fentanyl-laced drugs purchased on Snapchat. But it may save others, including our own.

Thank you.

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