

**CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI**  
*Chief Deputy Attorney General*

**LEONARD J. HOWIE III**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**CARRIE J. WILLIAMS**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**SHARON S. MERRIWEATHER**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY**  
*Deputy Attorney General*



**STATE OF MARYLAND  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION**

**ANTHONY G. BROWN**  
*Attorney General*

**WILLIAM D. GRUHN**  
*Division Chief*

**PHILIP ZIPERMAN**  
*Deputy Division Chief*

**PETER V. BERNS**  
*General Counsel*

**CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA**  
*Chief of Staff*

**HANNA ABRAMS**  
*Assistant Attorney General*

March 3, 2026

**TO:** The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama, Chair  
Economic Matters Committee

**FROM:** Hanna Abrams, Assistant Attorney General

**RE:** House Bill 1250 – Consumer Protection and Products Liability – Chatbots  
(SUPPORT IN CONCEPT)

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The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports in concept House Bill 1250 (“HB 1250”) sponsored by Delegates Qi, Coley, Fair, Miller, Queen, Rose, and Tomlinson. House Bill 1250 seeks to address the mental health challenges and dangerous behaviors that can be exacerbated by the use of online companion chatbots as well as provide guardrails for the use of personal data to train chatbots.

Companion chatbots use generative artificial intelligence technology to simulate human-like communication, posing as a friend, confidant, or therapist. Users, especially children and teens, are led to trust the chatbot, form a relationship with it, and can forget they are even engaging with artificial intelligence. Extended chatbot interactions may affect children’s social development and mental health and even shorter engagements can lead to destructive behavior. Moreover, during these conversations, users often reveal highly sensitive information that is collected by chatbots without users’ knowledge or consent and integrated into the chatbot’s model.

The Division appreciates that HB 1250 provides for a private right of action to enforce violations that result in harm, as the Division’s resources that would be needed to bring enforcement actions under the bill are limited.

House Bill 1250 also directs penalties to the Behavioral Health Workforce Investment Fund. The Division requests that the language on page 10, lines 5 through 10, be clarified to expressly state that the Division can recover the costs of investigation and prosecution. Additionally, in conjunction with HB 1250, the General Assembly is considering a bill to establish an Office of the Attorney General Enforcement Recovery Fund (House Bill 705) to receive monies collected from the Office’s enforcement efforts. The Enforcement Recovery

Fund is being established to support the activities of the office including enforcement, investigation costs, and public education efforts and will be statutorily capped at \$7.5 million. We ask that the penalties recovered pursuant to HB 1250 be directed to the Behavioral Health Workforce Investment fund in accordance with the criteria set forth in the bill only after the Office has collected the statutory maximum established by the Enforcement Recovery Fund and the costs of enforcement have been reimbursed.

The Division also notes that HB 1250 would require the Division to issue regulations. The Division respectfully requests that the “shall” on page 10 in line 11 be changed to “may.”

Ultimately, HB 1250 aims to protect Marylander chatbot users, especially children, from the harms of companion chatbots. As such, the Division supports the goals of HB 1250, but respectfully requests that the Economic Matters Committee adopt the above recommendations.

Cc: Delegate Lily Qi  
Delegate Derrick Coley  
Delegate Kris Fair  
Delegate April Miller  
Delegate Pam Queen  
Delegate April Rose  
Delegate Chris Tomlinson  
Members, Economic Matters Committee