

March 30, 2026

The Honorable Pam Beidle  
Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
Maryland Senate  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

*RE: HB 883 (Qi) - Consumer Protection - Artificial Intelligence - Behavioral Health Care Prohibitions – Unfavorable*

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of TechNet, I'm writing to share comments on HB 883.

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of American innovation by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. TechNet's diverse membership includes more than 100 dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents five million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, transportation, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance.

TechNet supports the underlying concept of HB 883 – to protect Marylanders seeking behavioral health support. However, we have several concerns with HB 883.

HB 883 requires every AI system to provide disclosure "at the beginning of each use" and implement suicide detection protocols, even if the AI is not designed for, marketed as, or capable of providing behavioral health care. This means voice assistants would have to announce "I'm not a human" before answering questions about the weather, playing music, or setting timers. As a result, users will lose the natural, seamless experience that makes AI assistants useful, while gaining no meaningful safety benefit since these products already don't claim to provide clinical care.

Additionally, the bill requires suicide ideation detection and automatic referral protocols for any AI that might encounter behavioral health topics in conversation, regardless of whether the product is designed for mental health support. The problem with this mandate is that general-purpose AI assistants would need to

implement clinical-grade mental health screening for every interaction, even though they're productivity and convenience tools, not healthcare products. This creates significant liability exposure for products that already responsibly direct users to professional help when appropriate. We are also concerned about the definition of developer and believe this definition should be clarified further to avoid it conflating with deployers operating in the AI space.

The bill, as amended by the House, provides for a private right of action (PRA). We believe that PRAs lead to frivolous lawsuits and only benefit a small subset of industry operating in the litigation space. We believe any enforcement should rest solely with the Attorney General.

Other states have crafted narrower legislation that focuses on AI systems specifically designed or marketed for behavioral health services, with exemptions for general-purpose tools. By failing to distinguish between dedicated mental health chatbots and general assistants, HB 883 either drives useful AI products out of Maryland or forces companies to implement expensive, ineffective compliance measures that don't improve safety. A targeted approach would protect vulnerable users without negatively impacting everyday technology.

For the reasons stated above, TechNet is opposed to HB 883 in its current form. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

*Margaret Durkin*

Margaret Durkin  
TechNet Executive Director, Pennsylvania & the Mid-Atlantic