



Tech Oversight

CALIFORNIA

August 24, 2026

Re: AB 1709 (Lowenthal) Covered platforms: age restriction: e-Safety Advisory Commission

Dear Assemblymembers Lowenthal, Alvarez, Bauer-Kahan, Bonta, Hoover, Muratsuchi, Patterson, and Wicks and Senator Stern:

Tech Oversight California is an advocacy organization that champions meaningful tech accountability reforms to address Big Tech's toxic business model and provide powerful online protections for Californians. As longstanding advocates for safety-by-design legislation and platform accountability—and as an organization that has championed the landmark social media addiction trials, including the ongoing multistate trial in Oakland and the recent Los Angeles bellwether case in which a jury found Meta and Google liable for designing platforms that addict and harm children—we are pleased to offer our support AB 1709 as amended on July 9, 2026.

We support AB 1709 because it would deactivate addictive features for young users under 16 – rather than barring them from online spaces altogether. Thank you for hearing our concerns, bringing youth advocates to the table, and removing the parts of the bill that could have limited access for young people instead of holding companies accountable for making platforms safer. The amended bill aligns with [recent recommendations](#) from the United Nations that support making platforms safer for children rather than shutting them out of these spaces entirely.

California has long been a national leader in confronting the harms posed by social media, and AB 1709 represents an important step in advancing that leadership. Protecting children from products intentionally designed to maximize engagement at the expense of their well-being is an urgent public policy priority, and we appreciate your commitment to addressing these harms.

We strongly support the bill's approach of restricting the addictive features that hook and harm developing brains, including auto-scroll, infinite scroll, and push notifications during the school day and overnight. These are deliberate design choices, built to capture our kids' attention and keep them scrolling. Turning them off for young users puts responsibility where it belongs – on the companies that profit from these products, instead of on families alone.

We also recognize that online spaces can provide meaningful benefits for many young people, particularly those from marginalized communities who may rely on digital spaces for support, connection, and affirmation. That reality underscores the importance of continuing California's leadership in promoting safer online environments through strong platform accountability and thoughtful policy innovation.

AB 1709 is bipartisan. It has earned broad support. And it will give the children of California a healthier, safer childhood. We are proud to support this bill and look forward to continuing to work with you to advance meaningful tech accountability and youth safety online.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sacha Haworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sacha" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Haworth".

Sacha Haworth

Executive Director, Tech Oversight California