

April 11, 2022

The Honorable Assemblymember Mark Stone
Chair, Assembly Committee on Judiciary
Room 104, Legislative Office Building
1020 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2408 (Cunningham)—SUPPORT

Dear Chair Stone and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Common Sense, I am writing to express our strong support for Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham's Social Media Platform Duty to Children Act: AB 2408. AB 2408 is a strong example of how our government can support the creation of digital spaces that are safe for children. That's why Common Sense is honored to be a co-sponsor of this legislation.

As you know, targeting young people with products that are known to be addictive is both unethical and a violation of the trust afforded to corporations. Much like Big Tobacco, Big Tech has realized that addicting kids — whose brains and identities still are developing — can produce astronomical profits. For that reason, social media platforms are designed to exploit kids' and teens' attention and extract their data for the sake of advertising.

And it's working: For example, from Jan. 1 to Sept. 30, 2021, Facebook raked in \$82.3 billion from advertising. During the same period, YouTube made \$20.2 billion from advertising.

Keeping children engaged and addicted is driving how these technology organizations design their platforms, and without regulation to change their practices, they will continue to do so. Design features such as emoji reactions and comments, autoplay and infinite scroll, push notifications, ephemeral content, and "beautifying" filters keep kids clicking, but they also can provoke social comparison, addiction, social pressure, fear of missing out, body image issues, and more.

As stated by Common Sense's Founder and CEO James P. Steyer, *"We know there are many ways that social media platforms can harm kids. And tech companies know it, too. Addictive design features, algorithmic amplification of harmful content, and overly commercial content are just some of the harms social media platforms inflict on kids and teens. Big tech companies won't change their practices on their own, but California can take an important step to force them to do the right thing for our kids, teens, and families."*

For these reasons, Common Sense is proud to co-sponsor this measure and respectfully asks for your "Aye" vote on AB 2408.

Sincerely,



Marvin J. Deon II
Vice President, CA Policy, Common Sense Media