



March 2, 2023

The Honorable Steven Holt
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Re: OPPOSE - H.S.B. 223: Parental consent regarding internet sites

Dear Chair Holt and Members of the Committee:

Chamber of Progress, a tech industry coalition, respectfully opposes **H.S.B. 223, which could counterproductively put children at risk, and disrupt the online experiences of all users, including adults.** Though well intentioned, H.S.B. 223 risks eroding access to critical resources and privacy for everyone online.

Chamber of Progress supports public policies at the federal and state level that seek to build a fairer, more inclusive country in which all Americans benefit from technological leaps.

We agree that protecting young people online is an important goal. In recent years, many platforms have heard the concerns from parents and researchers and have implemented new features to protect younger users.

For example, in 2021, Instagram rolled out new settings that give teens and parents more control over potentially upsetting content. And platforms like YouTube Kids provide a curated experience for children.

Because this bill requires a social media company or a gaming site to ensure that a child in the state is not utilizing the company's internet site or gaming site without a parent's or legal guardian's consent, **platforms will be required to deploy age verification tools that could sacrifice all users' privacy in the name of increased security.**

Any attempt to regulate children's access to social media will require platforms to differentiate between adult users and child users and ensure that child users have obtained consent. Platforms would almost certainly be required to collect some age-related information, via check-points demanding identification documents or even facial recognition, from *all users*.

In other words, covered platforms would be forced to collect even more sensitive data of everyone online.

With that, age verification also discourages free expression as anyone looking to participate in online discussions would be forced to disclose personal details before accessing a platform.

Additionally, the proposed legislation would not seem to have a meaningful impact in reducing the exposure of children and teens to certain content. Those users could receive the content from friends through direct messaging. As such, the bill would likely not prevent children from interacting with the "harmful" content that the bill seeks to regulate while substantially impeding the online experiences of all users.

Further, federal law, such as the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act already provides substantial benefits for children.¹

In summary, we ask you to prioritize the needs of teens and avoid creating age verification requirements that would sacrifice all users' privacy.

For these reasons, we must respectfully oppose SB 125 and urge a NO vote.

Respectfully,



Tepring Piquado, PhD
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Chamber of Progress

¹ <https://epic.org/issues/data-protection/childrens-privacy/>