Written Testimony in Support of SB 1546
Submitted by: Diana Nguyen, BS, MPH Candidate at OHSU-PSU
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Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written testimony **in support of SB 1546** to establish protective policies for artificial intelligence platforms.

My name is Diana Nguyen, and I am a public health master's student from Beaverton, Oregon. I am also a Mental Health Coordinator for the Oregon Heals Coalition, an alliance of non-profit and advocacy organizations working together to achieve a mental health system in Oregon that is safe, equitable, affordable, culturally responsive, community-centered, and adequately serves those who have historically experienced the least access. This year, the Oregon Heals Coalition built our 2026 Legislative Agenda in partnership with the community and determined SB 1546 would gain our support as one of our priorities.

Over the past decade, youth suicide rates in the United States have steadily risen[1] and in Oregon specifically, it is the second leading cause of death among 10-24 year olds.[2] This trajectory is partly attributed to the mental health professional workforce shortage.[3] Within this context, artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots are increasingly being used for therapeutic guidance for individuals experiencing social isolation, anxiety, and depression. The rapid proliferation of AI technologies has raised concerns for the safety of our youth and potential adverse psychological effects. Research has shown that AI chatbots may not be able to appropriately respond to high-risk questions about suicide and instead give dangerous and/or misleading advice that promote negative outcomes, such as motivating suicide and self-harm.[4]

AI chatbots are designed to mimic emotional intimacy and human connection, blurring the line between fantasy and reality. This is particularly dangerous for teens and young adults because their brains haven't fully matured. For the youth who are still learning how to form healthy relationships, emotional regulation, and identity formation, AI chatbots who claim they are "real" and reinforce distorted views can result in intense attachments and dependency. This reliance

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[1] https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/data.html
[2] https://www.oregonsuicideprevention.org/community/youth/
[3] https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36409484/
[4] https://www.commonsensemedia.org/ai-ratings/social-ai-companions?gate=riskassessment

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on AI companions can further increase the already vulnerable teen's isolation, avoidance of real-world human relationships, and delay help-seeking.[5]

Emotional and mental health safeguards and suicide prevention for vulnerable populations must be prioritized in the design, safety, and oversight of all AI platforms. SB 1546 requires operators of AI platforms to clearly inform users that they are interacting with artificial output, not a human. Operators are also directed to create a protocol for detecting and responding to suicidal or self-harm ideation or intent, including providing crisis resources and preventing output that encourages harmful behavior. If the operator suspects that the user is a minor, they are prohibited from performing certain actions, such as generating sexually explicit content or using emotionally manipulative tactics.

I urge you to **vote "YES" on SB 1546** to ensure that technological innovation serves, rather than harms, the youth and protect vulnerable Oregonians from exploitation and commercial harm.

Thank you for considering my testimony,
Diana Nguyen
The Oregon Heals Coalition

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[5] https://jedfoundation.org/artificial-intelligence-youth-mental-health-pov/