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On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1546

Thank you Chairman Reynolds, Vice Chair Anderson, and members of this Committee for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 1546.

I am Cassandra Dickson, a writer and parent coach who has lived in Oregon for over 25 years.

Experience shapes brain structure. We know that kids thrive when their developmental needs for human nurturance, play, safety, and learning are met. In recent years, we have witnessed the profound physical, emotional, and academic problems that can result from kids growing up in screen-saturated environments. The startling rise of chatbot use threatens a further disruption and displacement of the essential, face-to-face, \*real relationships\* that young people need not only to thrive, but to develop normally.

Social scientist and tech scholar Sherry Turkle has written: "The prospect of loving, or being loved by, a machine changes what love can be." In 2010, Turkle warned that the psychological self interacting with chatbots would learn to prefer simulation-driven relationships over complex real-world relationships, where vital social and emotional learning occurs. In 2026, the formerly unthinkable costs of Big Tech's manipulative design practices with regard to social media and emerging AI technologies are all around us.

Oregonians need and deserve safeguards around this powerful chatbot technology. SB 1546 provides commonsense guardrails for minors and other vulnerable populations. Requiring operators of AI companions to be more transparent with users prevents innovation from becoming exploitation. I strongly support passage of Senate Bill 1546. Thank you.