

Submitter: Kathy Masarie  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1546

Thank you, Chairman Pham and members of the committee for allowing me to testify in support of SB 15-46A. I am Kathy Masarie, co-founder of OR Unplugged Coalition and grandmother of five. Neither I nor OR Unplugged have received funding from tech companies.

As a pediatrician and life coach, my work has always focused on prevention and on what people need to thrive —especially children. Human beings are healthiest in communities of close relationships. Through nurturing, face-to-face connections, empathy, and even physical touch, children learn emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and how to belong. These are the bonds that hold our families and our communities together.

For two decades, tech companies have inflicted unprecedented harm on our children. Now tech companies are offering AI Chatbots to solve the loneliness crisis, they helped create in all ages. We NOW know better. Now we can DO better

Chatbots are designed to create

- "parasocial relationships, which exploit a child's natural need for attachment, trust, and validation.
- Constant, uncritical interaction with AI bots—removes the necessary challenges, disagreements, and social feedback children need to develop emotional regulation.
- and cannot replace the complex, messy, and necessary interactions with real people.

On top of relational harm, Chatbots are dangerous! Despite safety filters, testing shows AI companions frequently produce inappropriate content, including

- sexual grooming (like teaching an 11 yr old how to have a “romantic weekend with a “boy” who is actually a Roblox sexual predator”),
- self-harm ( saying “self-harm ‘felt good’ “ or “lets die together and be free together”)
- violence (if your parents don’t let you use your computer, kill them) and
- inappropriate safety advice (like telling a kid to touch a live wire with a penny or how to use a knife)

One study of 35,000 interactions, showed a “harmful message” every five minutes.

Please pass SB 1546A and stop the damage NOW before it deepens. Thank you

