

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Youth Health & Safety, Select
For HB 18

Compiled on: Monday, March 20, 2023 10:34 PM

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Hearing Date: March 20, 2023 2:30 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Tom Nois, Mr.
'self' and I am retired
Houston, TX

I am FOR HB18. All actions involving minor children should have parental consent which this bill provides in connection with digital services. Any action involving children should be predicated on the grounds that they may not cause harm which this bill provides in connection with digital services. Again, I am FOR HB18

Kathy Davenport
Self
Ft Worth,, TX

All digital control should be with the parent. Platforms like Tiktok, Instagram targeting minors needs to hold high penalties.

Marycarmen Srinivasan, Ms

Self

San Antonio, TX

Good afternoon, Madam Chair and committee members. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is MaryCarmen Srinivasan, I am a parent of a junior at Churchill High School in San Antonio.

As a parent I have seen firsthand how social media can negatively affect a child's mental health and overall wellbeing. Kids, more than ever, have easy access to dangerous and mature topics such as drugs, pornography, and even self destructive behaviors in regards to mental illnesses- like eating disorders.

If your child is already dealing with mental health issues, the algorithm can listen to this and start advertising to you. For example, I searched for vaping once on Instagram, got a disclaimer but also gave me the choice to join groups or see also minors in these groups. The way the algorithm can listen to what you're saying, or remember what you're searching, and open up many different accesses of said searches is very concerning.

Although this can be a problem for anyone, it becomes specifically concerning for minors. The internet and social media is constantly changing every year- and it's hard to keep up. Before this, your role as a parent was to keep them safe from the physical world and the dangers that come from it, but now, we have to keep them safe from the virtual world- which follows its own rules that differ from each website and app.

I have tried many ways to limit access to the hazards of social media for my child, and yet, there is always a way for someone to get access to things that can harm them. I have seen firsthand how it has negatively impacted my child's mental health with their eating disorder and self destructive patterns. Not to mention, the strain and exhaustion that comes with having to juggle all of this, not including needing to work to pay the bills of what social media has helped to damage my kid.

Social media can be a great way to connect people but it makes it too easy to connect bad people to good children.

I have already lost one child, I can't lose another due to social media.

Terrie Chumchal

Self-RN

Joshua, TX

My son had a sexual rumor started about him at school, that carried over onto snapchat. This was a devastating bullying incident that turned into cyberbullying. There was no punishment relating to the social media post about my son from school or snapchat. Social media companies **HAVE TO BE ACCOUNTABLE** for the access and content being shared on their sites about minor children!

Shariq Ghani, Executive Director

Minaret Foundation

Richmond, TX

Rep. Slawson's bill is an innovative step forward for the mental health of our children, and allows Texas to set a standard for industry throughout our nation. While there has been much opposition to this bill, the spirit of HB 18 and the impact it can make for our children will be highly impactful and immediately noticeable. We ask that you provide favorable consideration for HB 18.