



Tech Oversight

CALIFORNIA

September 7, 2025

Re: SB 243: Removing SUPPORT

Senator Padilla:

Thank you for your diligent work on SB 243 related to companion AI. As advocates for the privacy, safety, and well-being of all Californians, we are concerned that the recent amendments significantly weaken key elements of the bill and set a dangerous precedent in statute that could limit pathways to redress and give parents and all users of companion AI a false sense of protection.

While there are a number of amendments that are concerning, the four discussed below so dramatically undermine the protections in the bill that **we can, regrettably, no longer remain in support.**

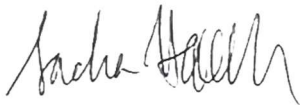
Amendments introduced on September 4th create:

- **Weaker protections:** The new amendments sharply dial back notifications for users and set the lowest possible bar for operators to prevent youth from being exposed to pornography and sexually explicit conduct. Furthermore, new language intended to protect kids requires “actual knowledge” of minors’ ages, which [history has shown](#) operators can easily ignore.
- **Industry-friendly exemptions:** Last-minute changes exempt a range of products, including video games, where AI chatbots are already [interacting problematically](#) with kids, and smart speakers such as Amazon’s Alexa products.
- **Elimination of third party audits:** Amendments cut out independent third party audits of companion chatbot platforms to ensure compliance with the act.

- **A long implementation delay for reporting:** The reporting requirements in the bill would not take effect until July 2027 – an unacceptably long wait for transparency when harms are happening now and communities are calling for urgent action.

All Californians need concrete protections from the fast-emerging companion AI market, and it is our hope that the Legislature will continue to lead the nation in this critical space. We have been supportive of this bill as it moved through the legislative process, but we are disheartened at the many elements in the recent amendments that render the bill to be little more than value signaling. We are **forced to remove our support for this measure as these changes mean that SB243 will not adequately provide additional protections to Californians and will set a dangerous precedent other states may follow.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sacha Haworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sacha" being more legible than the last name "Haworth".

Sacha Haworth, Executive Director, Tech Oversight California