

Written Testimony in Support of LD 844: An Act to Protect Maine's Children from Harmful Social Media Practices

Submitted by Crystal Schreck

Co-founder, Falmouth Alliance for Thoughtful Technology

Member, Turn the Tide Coalition of Maine

March 17, 2025

Dear Honorable Senators and Members of the Committee,

My name is Crystal Schreck, and I am a mother of six children, ranging in age from 6 to 25. I am also a co-founder of Falmouth Alliance for Thoughtful Technology and a member of the Turn the Tide Coalition, a collaborative effort uniting districts across Southern Maine to pursue more intentional, research-based approaches to screens and technology. I submit this testimony today in strong support of LD 844, a vital piece of legislation designed to protect Maine's children from the documented harms of social media.

As both a parent and advocate, I have witnessed firsthand how rapidly the landscape of childhood has shifted in the age of smartphones and social media. Unfortunately, research consistently shows that these platforms are not neutral tools—they are designed to maximize engagement, often at the expense of the well-being of our youth.

A 2023 study published in JAMA Pediatrics found that adolescents who spent more than three hours per day on social media had double the risk of experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression ([Riehm et al., 2023](#)).

Internal research leaked by Meta in 2021 revealed that Instagram exacerbates body image issues for 1 in 3 teenage girls ([Wall Street Journal, 2021](#)). The same research showed that the platform fuels social comparison, increases feelings of inadequacy, and amplifies anxiety and depression.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 1 in 3 teenage girls seriously considered attempting suicide in 2021, a startling 60% increase over the past decade ([CDC, 2023](#)). Additionally, feelings of persistent sadness and hopelessness are at record highs among teens, particularly adolescent girls.

These negative effects are not accidental. Social media platforms create algorithms designed to maximize engagement by exploiting the psychological vulnerabilities of young users. Features like endless scrolling, targeted notifications, and content recommendation loops are purposefully

built to keep users hooked, often leading to compulsive use. Developmentally, children and teens are ill-equipped to self-regulate in the face of these powerful, addictive design features. ([Giedd, 2015](#)). This leaves adolescents particularly vulnerable to manipulative digital environments. We regulate substances like tobacco and alcohol for minors because we understand the long-term risks. Why should social media, which is proving to have comparable impacts on adolescent mental health, be treated any differently?

The evidence is unequivocal, and the stakes for our children's well-being are simply too great to ignore. I fully recognize the depth of experience and insight you bring as policymakers and understand that much of this research may already be well-known to you. Still, I urge you to act. As parents, educators, and leaders, we share a moral obligation to place the health and safety of Maine's children above corporate interests.

I implore you to consider a vote in favor of LD 844 and send a clear message that Maine leads the way in protecting its youth from the harms of unregulated social media.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Crystal Schreck

Co-founder, Falmouth Alliance for Thoughtful Technology

Member, Turn the Tide Coalition of Maine