

Testimony of Deborah L. Drew, Ed.D., LCPC

February 15, 2026

In Support of LD 2162: An Act to Regulate and Prevent Children's Access to Artificial Intelligence Chatbots with Human-like Features and Social Artificial Intelligence Companions

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services:

My name is Dr. Deborah Drew and I am a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and a Maine certified School Counselor practicing in the State of Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my strong support for LD 2162.

Every day in my work as a clinical supervisor and educator of clinical mental health counselors and school counselors in Maine, I hear about the extremely difficult mental health struggles of our children and adolescents. It is a very vulnerable time for young people. Given their easy access to technology and social media and their pervasive loneliness and despair, it is most tempting to interact with an entity online that seems like it cares and can provide feedback. These same children and adolescents for the most part cannot legally consent to mental health treatment from a licensed professionally trained mental health provider without parent or guardian consent. Yet, they can access AI Chatbots with little or no regulation.

This bill appropriately prevents children and adolescents from AI Chatbots unless prescribed by a licensed mental health professional who, in most cases, has obtained the consent from the parent or guardian of the minor to provide services and prescribe this service. These are timely and critical safeguards for Maine's children and adolescents.

I urge you to support the passage of LD 2162. This bill both protects minors, yet allows for appropriate prescribed and regulated use of AI technology under the supervision of a licensed mental health provider working with the child or adolescent.