



March 21, 2022

Chair Becker-Finn
House Judiciary, Finance, and Civil Law Committee
75 Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: CCIA Comments on HF 3724–Oppose

Dear Chair Becker-Finn, Vice Chair Moller, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA),¹ I write in respectful opposition to HF 3724. CCIA is a not-for-profit trade association representing small, medium, and large communications and technology firms. For 50 years, the Association has promoted open markets, open systems, and open networks. While CCIA shares the bill sponsors’ underlying goal to keep youth safe online, we believe this bill might unintentionally undermine the efforts of digital services to protect minors from harmful content.

Businesses do not want dangerous or illegal conduct or content on their services. To remain competitive and grow, they have a business incentive to keep users – most importantly young users – safe online. For example, Twitter recently announced plans to expand its “Safety Mode” feature, which will provide users with improved mechanisms to combat harassment and harmful content.² Just last week, Instagram launched its “Family Center,” a new tool to provide parents with more supervision and control over their childrens’ accounts.³ Digital services dedicate significant resources toward the ongoing research, development, and deployment of tools to protect their users. Further, the flexibility that digital services have to implement new and innovative processes to protect users is helping to pave the way for smaller technology companies that may not have the resources to dedicate to the development of safety tools.⁴ HF 3724 would prevent all services from using critical software-powered instruments to combat online harms.

In addition to the efforts of individual digital services, a range of stakeholder groups are taking steps to address online safety. For example, the recently-launched Digital Trust & Safety Partnership (DTSP) is bringing together leading digital services to develop and implement industry best practices to promote safety.⁵ In addition, groups such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), the Global Internet Forum to Counter

¹ CCIA is an international, not-for-profit trade association representing a broad cross section of communications and technology firms. For fifty years, CCIA has promoted open markets, open systems, and open networks. The Association advocates for sound competition policy and antitrust enforcement. CCIA members employ more than 1.6 million workers, invest more than \$100 billion in research and development, and contribute trillions of dollars in productivity to the global economy. For more, visit www.ccianet.org.

² TechCrunch, *Twitter launches beta test of anti-abuse tool “Safety Mode,” adds prompts to enable it.* (Feb, 15, 2022), <https://techcrunch.com/2022/02/15/twitter-expands-access-to-anti-abuse-tool-safety-mode-adds-prompts-to-enable-it/>.

³ Meta, *Introducing Family Center and Parental Supervision Tools on Instagram and in VR* (Mar. 16, 2022), <https://about.fb.com/news/2022/03/parental-supervision-tools-instagram-vr>.

⁴ Engine, *Startup Agenda 2022*, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/571681753c44d835a440c8b5/t/61f81e448a48af12e73837d9/1643650628510/Engine+2022+Startup+Policy+Agenda.pdf> (last visited Mar. 17, 2022), at 5.

⁵ For more information about the Digital Trust & Safety Partnership please visit: <https://dtspartnership.org/>.



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Terrorism (GIFCT), and the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) promote collaboration and information sharing between civil society, industry, and government to help prevent and combat online crime.

While CCIA agrees more work can and must be done to keep children safe online, HF 3724 is not the solution. We recommend the Committee resist legislating in a fashion that may be not only counterproductive to efforts to protect children, but may invite constitutional challenges to restrictions on software that are not adequately tailored to the objective.⁶ Instead, we urge the legislature to conduct further study of both the benefits and drawbacks of technologies used by digital services, and to join existing stakeholders to support the ongoing development of practicable solutions to keep all users safe online.

We appreciate Members' consideration of these comments and stand ready to provide additional information as the Committee considers this bill.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Doom
State Policy Director
Computer & Communications Industry Association

⁶ Computer & Communications Industry Association, *Texas Judge Blocks Unconstitutional Social Media Law*. (Dec. 1, 2021), <https://www.cciagnet.org/2021/12/texas-judge-blocks-unconstitutional-texas-social-media-law/>.