

SB 1546 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Reynolds

Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

Action Date: 02/12/26

Action: Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 4-1-0-0

Yea: 4 - Anderson, Gelser Blouin, Patterson, Reynolds

Nays: 1 - Linthicum

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/3, 2/5, 2/12, 2/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure creates new requirements for operators of artificial intelligence (AI) companion platforms for users who experience suicidal or self-harm ideation, with additional requirements for minors, and establishes a private right of action for users harmed in violation of the requirements.

Detailed Summary:

Creates new requirements for AI companion platform operators. Defines key terms including “artificial intelligence companion,” “artificial intelligence companion platform,” “national 9-8-8 suicide and crisis lifeline,” “operator,” “sexually explicit content,” and “youthline.” Requires the operator of an AI companion platform to provide a clear and conspicuous notice that indicates the user of the platform is interacting with artificially generated output if a reasonable person would believe that they are interacting with a natural person. Requires operators of AI companion platforms to develop and publish an evidence-based protocol for detecting input that consists of suicidal or self-harm ideation. Requires the protocol to include referral to crisis services, and sets the parameters for that referral.

Creates additional requirements if the operator has reason to believe that the user of a platform is a minor. Requires the operator to prevent the AI companion from generating statements that would lead a reasonable person to think they are interacting with a natural person. Requires disclosures about artificially generated content, clear and conspicuous reminders to take breaks from the platform, and the prohibition of sexually explicit generated content. Prohibits the use of rewards, emotional manipulation, or misrepresentation to reinforce user behavior, prolong platform engagement, or mislead users about the AI companion’s nature or capabilities.

Directs platform operators to report the number of referrals to crisis resources and protocol details on their public websites by December 31 of each year. Creates a private right of action for individuals who suffer loss or injury due to an operator’s violation of the provisions in the measure.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Youth and adolescent brain development
- AI tools
- Behavioral health referral pathways for adults and youth

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

The amendment replaces Section 1 of the measure.

BACKGROUND:

AI chatbots are engineered or machine-based conversational agents that can generate responses to maintain dialogue with their users. AI companion chatbots may use generative AI technology to simulate human-like communication and interpersonal relationships with users. AI chatbots can effectively mimic human characteristics, emotions, and intentions and are generally designed to communicate like a friend or confidant, which may prompt some users, especially children and teens, to trust and form relationships with chatbots.

An [October 2025 survey](#) administered by *Harvard Business Review*, Gallup, and the Walton Family Foundation found that three out of four young adults in the United States used an AI chatbot at least once in the last month. Roughly a third of young adults reported turning to AI for help with their personal life, including “advice about relationships or life decisions,” 1 in 4 reported using chatbots “as a friend,” and 1 in 10 said they used an AI chatbot as a romantic partner. Legislatures in states including [California](#), [Illinois](#), [Nevada](#), [New York](#), and [Utah](#) have acted to regulate the use of AI in behavioral health treatment, to direct chatbots to detect instances of potential self-harm, and to refer users of AI chatbots to crisis hotlines. The Federal Trade Commission has issued orders to seven companies that provide consumer-facing AI-powered chatbots to understand how the operators measure, test, and monitor potentially negative impacts of AI companion chatbot technology on children and teens.