

Proponent Testimony to House Technology and Innovation

House Bill 524

February 3, 2026

Chair Thaddeus Claggett and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony in support of House Bill 524. My name is Marc-Dugré Telfort, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of **Unite for Safe Social Media**, a non-profit organization based in Columbus, Ohio. Unite works to protect children, teens, and families from harm online, especially as new technologies like artificial intelligence become more common in everyday life.

Artificial intelligence is already shaping the online experiences of young people. Tweens and teens are increasingly exposed to AI-generated content, including fake images, deepfakes, and misleading or manipulative material. Research and recent cases show that this technology can be used to harass, deceive, or exploit young users, and in some cases can contribute to serious emotional harm. Because young people often cannot easily tell what is real and what is fake online, they are particularly vulnerable to these risks.

Across the country, states are beginning to respond. **New York's Responsible AI Safety and Education (RAISE) Act** and **California's Transparency in Frontier Artificial Intelligence Act (SB 53)** both focus on addressing risks posed by advanced AI systems. These laws require large AI developers to think about safety ahead of time, identify potential risks, and report serious safety incidents when they occur. We commend Ohio and the sponsors of HB 524 for recognizing that these issues matter and for taking action to protect Ohioans.

House Bill 524 is an important first step. Its focus on preventing the use of AI systems that encourage self-harm or harm to others directly addresses a real and urgent concern. By making clear that this type of AI use is unacceptable, the bill helps set boundaries around some of the most dangerous applications of this technology.

At the same time, Unite for Safe Social Media believes the bill could be strengthened in the future by building on elements found in laws like New York's RAISE Act and California's SB 53. Those approaches focus not only on penalties after harm occurs, but also on prevention — asking companies to plan for safety, identify risks ahead of time, and report serious incidents. Including similar preventive elements in Ohio's approach would further protect children, teens, and families before harm happens.

Unite for Safe Social Media supports House Bill 524 and thanks the committee and the bill's sponsors for their leadership on this issue. We look forward to continuing to work with the committee and sponsors to strengthen protections and ensure that Ohio keeps pace with the evolving risks posed by artificial intelligence. Thank you for your time and consideration.