

1 [Supporting California Senate Bill No. 287 (Skinner) - Features that Harm Child Users: Civil
2 Penalty]

3 **Resolution supporting California State Senate Bill No. 287, introduced by Senator**
4 **Nancy Skinner, that would prohibit a social media platform, as defined, from using a**
5 **design, algorithm, or feature that the platform knows, or which by the exercise of**
6 **reasonable care should have known, causes child users to harmful practices and/or**
7 **behaviors, including experience addiction to the social media platform.**
8

9 WHEREAS, Algorithms are designed and used on social media platforms to sort
10 content in a user's feed, prioritizing content that the user sees, which can in turn increase the
11 likelihood that the user will want to see and engage with that algorithm-selected content; and

12 WHEREAS, Research demonstrates that social media companies' algorithms direct
13 their users to specific content, including content that promotes dangerous and harmful
14 practices; and

15 WHEREAS, Research also shows that algorithms do not particularly respond to
16 content desired or relevant to the user, rather target the user with content chosen by the
17 algorithm; and

18 WHEREAS, An analysis of YouTube found that videos got millions of views even
19 though they were not relevant to the user but were chosen by the algorithm and that 64
20 percent of users came across videos that seemed false or untrue, while 60 percent
21 encountered videos with people taking part in dangerous or troubling behavior; and

22 WHEREAS, Studies have shown that social media has a powerful effect on the brain,
23 and it can create stimulating effects similar to addiction; and
24
25

1 WHEREAS, Adolescence is the second biggest period of growth in the brain, which
2 makes teens particularly susceptible to addictiveness of social media, as their brains and
3 social skills are rapidly developing; and

4 WHEREAS, A recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical
5 Association (JAMA) revealed that teens who use social media more than three hours per day
6 may be at heightened risk for mental health problems; and

7 WHEREAS, Since the pandemic there has been an uptick in depression and anxiety
8 among teens, specifically low self-esteem, disordered eating, body image issues and suicidal
9 thoughts; and

10 WHEREAS, A survey published by the nonprofit research organization Common Sense
11 Media found that overall screen use among teens and tweens increased by 17 percent from
12 2019 to 2021 - growing more rapidly than in the four years prior; and

13 WHEREAS, The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) published the abuse of social
14 media by criminal drug networks to expand their reach, create new markets, and target new
15 clientele, including the sale of deadly fake fentanyl and methamphetamine pills, often to
16 unsuspecting teenagers; and

17 WHEREAS, The DEA has also identified that drug traffickers advertise on social media
18 platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter and YouTube with secret
19 codes and emojis that make it easier to evade; and

20 WHEREAS, In 2021, the California Department of Public Health reported 5,722
21 fentanyl-related overdose deaths in California, 224 of which were teens ages 15-19 years old;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, SB 287 bill would prohibit social media companies from using algorithms
24 that could lead children to buy fentanyl, harm themselves or others, die by suicide, or develop
25

1 an eating disorder as well as algorithms that would lead anyone to buy illegal firearms,
2 including ghost guns; and

3 WHEREAS, SB 287 would also hold social media companies accountable for using
4 algorithms that influence children to harm themselves or others and that prompt people to buy
5 illegal guns or substances; now therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco and the San Francisco Board
7 of Supervisors supports Senate Bill No. 287 which would prohibit a social media platform, as
8 defined, from using a design, algorithm, or feature that the platform knows, or which by the
9 exercise of reasonable care should have known, causes child users to do any of certain
10 things, including experience addiction to the social media platform; and, be it

11 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the City and
12 County of San Francisco distribute this resolution to San Francisco's State Legislative
13 Delegation and to California Governor Gavin Newsom.