



August 16, 2024

Senator Henry Stern  
1021 O Street, Suite 7710  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SUBJECT — SENATE BILL 1283 (AMENDED AUGUST 12<sup>TH</sup>) – OPPOSE**

On behalf of the California Policy Center, I write in opposition to SB 1283 as it was amended on August 12<sup>th</sup>. The bill is – thankfully – significantly less chilling than the August 5<sup>th</sup> amended version, but still unnecessary and a potential deadletter statute should the governor decide to sign the bill.

I think that Alexis de Tocqueville summarized the problems we're facing in his seminal book, *Democracy in America*, nearly two centuries ago.

*“After having thus successively taken each member of the community in its powerful grasp and fashioned him at will, the supreme power then extends its arm over the whole community. It covers the surface of society with a network of small complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent, and guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting. Such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd.”*

Since current law already allows school districts to limit or prohibit the use of cellphones on campus, we're unsure why the legislature needs to explicitly extend that same authority over social media. And anyone with a child in California's public schools knows just how difficult it is to actually enforce cellphone bans. This bill suffers the same deficiencies.

Perhaps the legislature should focus on better curriculum rather than enervating fads? Kids wouldn't need to spend more time in front of screens if they were more immersed in books. For these reasons we oppose SB 1283.

Sincerely,

Lance Christensen  
Vice President of Education Policy & Government Affairs