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Chair
Health Occupations and
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Joint Committee on Administrative,
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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg
Before the Appropriations and Economic Matters Committees
In Support of
House Bill 1119
Algorithmic Addiction Fund – Establishment

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committees:

Research has demonstrated the negative impacts of social media. This isn't a random occurrence. Social media corporations deliberately design their algorithms to cause consumers to spend as much time as possible using their apps. This keeps the user addicted and spending more time on their platforms - hence algorithmic addiction.

The Algorithmic Addiction Fund would serve as a repository for all civil penalties and revenues generated from judgments against or settlements with technology companies, conglomerates, or social media firms. Attorney General Brown has joined others states in filing a lawsuit against Meta for harming the mental health of youth have already created similar funds for the moneys received from the State's lawsuits against the tobacco industry and the manufacturers and distributors of opioids. This language was specifically requested by the OAG and is the subject of the sponsor amendment.

These judgments or settlements are typically related to claims regarding the improper use of algorithms. The state would utilize these funds to recover damages for violations of state law. The fund is designed to track the amount of settlement money paid into it and to ensure that all revenues received from various sources are properly accounted for.

The fund could be used for specified uses only, for example, to provide funds for conducting a needs assessment throughout the state to determine where resources are needed and best practices for algorithmic addiction prevention, intervention, and treatment. It could also be used for improving and strengthening access to services proven to treat the mental and physical

health impacts associated with algorithmic addiction, including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and sleep problems.

Additionally, the fund can be used for algorithmic addiction intervention and prevention services, including the organization of primary and secondary school education campaigns to prevent algorithmic addiction and promote digital and media literacy, research and training for algorithmic addiction treatment and prevention, and social media and youth mental health. It can also be used for supporting and expanding other evidence-based interventions for algorithmic addiction prevention and treatment, including administrative expenses.

It is of utmost importance to establish accountability measures for companies associated with algorithmic addiction and to support efforts aimed at its prevention and recovery. This issue represents a significant concern in contemporary business and academic environments, where companies and individuals alike are vulnerable to the potentially harmful effects of algorithmic manipulation.

For the betterment of our constituents' mental health, I kindly request your support and a FAVORABLE report on HB 1119.

February 28, 2024