



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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**Testimony COMMENTING on SB 2458  
RELATING TO SCREEN TIME AWARENESS**

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR  
SENATOR GILBERT S.C. KEITH-AGARAN, VICE CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: 2/27/20

Room Number: 211

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (Department) **SUPPORTS THE INTENT** of  
2 this measure and offers the following **COMMENTS AND SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS.**

3 **Department Testimony:** The subject matter of this measure falls within the scope of the  
4 Department's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) whose statutory mandate is to assure a  
5 comprehensive statewide behavioral health care system by leveraging and coordinating public,  
6 private and community resources. Through the BHA, the Department is committed to carrying  
7 out this mandate by reducing silos, ensuring behavioral health care is readily accessible, and  
8 person-centered. The BHA's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) provides  
9 the following testimony on behalf of the Department.

10 With the advent of rapid technological advances and increasing engagement in screen-  
11 based activities, there have been growing concerns about the potential negative impacts of  
12 screen-based activities on the health and well-being of children and young people. **That said,**  
13 **research examining the relationship between children's mental health and screen time has**  
14 **demonstrated mixed findings:**

15 1. A recent systematic review of the effects of screen time on health and well-being  
16 in children and adolescents found: Only moderately strong evidence for  
17 associations between screen time and higher depressive symptoms; weak  
18 evidence for associations of screen time with behavior problems, anxiety,

1 hyperactivity and inattention, poorer self-esteem, poorer well-being and poorer  
2 psychosocial health; and no or insufficient evidence for an association of screen  
3 time with eating disorders or suicidal ideation<sup>1</sup>.

4 2. Another review suggested that studies examining screen-based activities were  
5 designed in such a way that it was difficult to determine causal relationships  
6 between screen time and mental health outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

7 3. Several large scale studies have actually found benefits to moderate digital  
8 engagement, suggesting that digital engagement (depending on how it is  
9 measured) does not necessarily displace positive developmental experiences.  
10 Because of this, some research goes so far as to suggest that “calls for blanket  
11 technology bans and age-based restrictions on technology access do not constitute  
12 evidence-based or indeed ethical advice.”<sup>3</sup>

13 Despite the absence of definitive data from the research literature, numerous national  
14 authorities have developed guidelines for families, including the Centers for Disease Control and  
15 Prevention (CDC)<sup>4</sup> and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)<sup>5</sup>. To align with these and  
16 other national recommendations, the Department supports the development of a local website  
17 that refers to existing, scientifically-informed resources (including those listed above). We stand  
18 committed to providing the public with ethical, data-driven findings on these topics. However,  
19 the Department believes that it is prudent to allow for research identifying the specific

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<sup>1</sup> Stiglic N, Viner RM. Effects of screentime on the health and well-being of children and adolescents: a systematic review of reviews. *BMJ Open* 2019;9.

<sup>2</sup> Dickson K , Richardson M,, Kwan I , MacDowall W , Burchett H, Stansfield C, Brunton G, Sutcliffe K, Thomas J (2018) Screen-based activities and children and young people’s mental health: A Systematic Map of Reviews, London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education, University College London.

<sup>3</sup> Przybylski, A, Orben, A, & Weinstein, N. (2019) How much is too much? Examining the relationship between digital screen engagement and psychosocial functioning in a confirmatory cohort study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, in press.

<sup>4</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018, January). Screen Time vs. Lean Time. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/multimedia/infographics/getmoving.html>

<sup>5</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics, Media and Children Communication Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx>

1 relationship between mental health and screen time to accumulate further and we do not  
2 recommend investing significant resources in a public education campaign at this time.

3 **Offered Amendments:** Amend Section 2 (a through b) as follows:

4 SECTION 2. (a) The department of health shall create and host a  
5 website that informs the public of the ~~impacts of~~ the possible  
6 relationships between screen time and children's and teens' mental  
7 health and ability to form strong, healthy relationships. The website  
8 shall:

9 (1) Summarize and include links to research on the potential  
10 relationship between ~~effects of~~ screen time on children's and teens'  
11 mental health and healthy relationship formation;

12 (2) If available, link to national websites that offer evidence-  
13 based screen time guidelines by age group;

14 (3) ~~Answer frequently asked questions; and~~

15 (4) Refer to national websites that offer evidence-based ~~quality~~  
16 resources and best practices that provide parents with ~~an~~  
17 ~~authoritative~~ sites to consult when deciding how to manage their  
18 family's screen time and overall health.

19 ~~(b) The department of health shall launch a public education~~  
20 ~~campaign to:~~

21 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department estimates developing an informational website and  
22 education campaign would require about \$200,000 in fiscal year 2020-2021 and \$350,000 in  
23 fiscal year 2021-2022 and defers to the priorities in the Governor's budget request.

24 Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**SB-2458-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2020 5:20:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2020 10:35:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Katrina Obleada	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**LATE**

**SB-2458-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2020 3:54:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2020 10:35:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lauren Paer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a resident here in Hawaii, I strongly support this bill. Mental health issues among youth has sky-rocketed in the past decade, which is right around when smartphones were widely adopted in society and among teens. A slew of articles published in many science and medical journals have found links between mental health problems in teens and excessive screen time in general and social media use in particular. There are multiple pathways this can happen including lack of sleep, social comparison, cyber bullying, lack of any break/rest from social pressures at school, displacement of face-to-face time with friends and family.

I've talked with many parents who confirm there aren't any structures in place to disseminate critical information about the impact of screens on their children. Most doctors don't stress this issue. Grandparents didn't have to deal with smartphones and tablets when they were raising kids, so they don't have experience to draw on. And most schools are not educating parents on this topic. Meanwhile, marketing campaigns for tablets, smartphones and "educational" apps send the message to parents that if their kids aren't on tech early, they will "fall behind". While the science is not conclusively settled, there is more than enough concerning evidence to warrant providing parents education on it.

I wish I could be there to testify in person, but I'm on a trip in California right now.

**SB-2458-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2020 5:11:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2020 10:35:00 AM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Diane L Koushki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am offering testimony in support of SB2458 and believe awareness related to screen time is critical. After teaching for over 34 years at local and mainland private and public schools, including Punahou Schools and Mae'mae Elementary School, I have observed many concerning behaviors related to the overuse of technology as a tool. In earlier days, I believe educators saw screen time as new frontier for helping students learn, however, it has become apparent to me that overuse has had a crucial and detrimental impact on personal communication skills in our society. I have observed students' lack of ability to show emotion (in facial expression, as well as expression of empathy) in their conversations, as well as a decline in effectiveness of communication in public speaking scenarios. I feel it is important that guidelines for appropriate screen time be made available for parents, teachers, and students. As well, current research related to negative impacts of specific age groups using screens should be made available here in Hawai'i.

**LATE**

**SB-2458-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2020 8:08:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2020 10:35:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kevin Paulson	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Dear committee, few advances have revolutionized our world more than the tech advances we have experienced over the last 20 years. With that, the amount of time the average individual spends staring at a flickering screen at close proximity has reached an astounding number. I have left the cubicle to avoid some of this but I still spend six hours or more in front of a screen on the average every day. I know that this has deleterious effects on my psyche and mental development and I am concerned about the effects on society. Nothing concerns me more in this regard than the development of children.

In a short while I have seen the changes in the younger generation, including a reduction in the ability to converse and interact with individuals on a one on one basis. What are the additional effects that I am not observing? I have gone so far as to purchase a ranch so as to allow my future children a place to grow up and learn in the way that humans have done for thousands of years. I am very concerned about the public health risk of excessive Screen Time during development. Please consider this concern as you study child development And as you allocate your funds for the education of the public.

**SB-2458-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2020 9:00:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2020 10:35:00 AM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Nancy Fleming	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a mother and grandmother born and raised in Hawaii. I have noticed more parents are on their phones and not engaging with their children. I worry about the effects this has on their children. I have also read that screen have negatively affected teenagers' mental health and development. I believe parents need better education on this subject so I strongly support this bill.