



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

SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR
SENATOR STANLEY CHANG, VICE CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION AND HEALTH

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOLE, CHAIR
SENATOR J. KALANI ENGLISH, VICE CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

Hearing Date: February 11, 2020

Room Number: 414

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. Interestingly,
13 research examining the relationship between children's mental health and screen time has
14 demonstrated mixed findings. A recent systematic review of the effects of screen time on health
15 and well-being in children and adolescents found moderately strong evidence for associations
16 between screen time and higher depressive symptoms; weak evidence for associations of screen

1 time with behavior problems, anxiety, hyperactivity and inattention, poorer self-esteem, poorer
2 well-being and poorer psychosocial health; and no or insufficient evidence for an association of
3 screen time with eating disorders or suicidal ideation¹. Another recent review suggested that
4 studies examining screen-based activities were designed in such a way that it was difficult to
5 determine causal relationships between screen time and mental health outcomes.²

6 Despite the absence of definitive data from the research literature, numerous national
7 authorities have developed guidelines for families. The Centers for Disease Control and
8 Prevention (CDC) endorses reducing screen time through increased physical activity and
9 provides national recommendations for different age groups³. The American Academy of
10 Pediatrics (AAP) recommends parents and caregivers develop a family media plan⁴. The
11 personalized planning tool, video-based instructions and tips for parents are available through
12 their website, Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest. Parental engagement, content quality, and
13 quantity of the screen time are all factors considered by the AAP in their screen time policy
14 recommendation that digital media use for children two to five years of age be limited to no
15 more than one hour per day to engage in other activities and establish healthy viewing patterns
16 for later in life⁵.

17 To align with these national recommendations, the Department supports the development
18 of a local website that refers to existing resources (including those listed above). While the
19 Department stands ready and willing to launch a public education campaign, we believe that it is
20 prudent to allow for research identifying the specific relationship between mental health and

¹ 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**:e023191.

² Dickson K1 , Richardson M1., Kwan I1 , MacDowall W2 , Burchett H2 , Stansfield C1 , Brunton G1 , Sutcliffe K1, Thomas J1 (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.

³ 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>

⁴ 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>

⁵ American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement, Pediatrics. November 2016, Vol 138/Issue 5. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162591>

1 screen time to accumulate further. That said, the Department would be willing to follow existing,
2 tested interventions (e.g., CDC's VERB™) to launch an education campaign aimed at increasing
3 physical activity for the purpose of reducing screen time. Evidence shows that using positive
4 messaging to motivate participation in physical activity has been more effective than promoting
5 the health costs of inactivity and would align the intervention with evidence-based social-
6 marketing strategies⁶.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁶ Latimer, A.E., Rench, T.A., Rivers, S.E., Katulak, N., Materese, S.A., Cadmus, L., Hicks, A., Hodorowski, J.K., & Slaovey, P. (2008). Promoting participation in physical activity using framed messages: An application of prospect theory. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 13, 659-681.

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department estimates developing an informational website and
- 2 education campaign would require about \$200,000 in fiscal year 2020-2021 and \$350,000 in
- 3 fiscal year 2021-2022 and defers to the priorities in the Governor's budget request.
- 4 Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

LATE

SB-2458

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 2:08:51 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/11/2020 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
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

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 3:24:31 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/11/2020 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
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 screens have negatively

affected teenagers' mental health.

I believe parents need better education on this subject so I strongly support this bill.

LATE

SB-2458

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 4:04:30 PM
Testimony for CPH on 2/11/2020 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elise Anderson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB 2458. The overuse of screens is an increasingly concerning factor in today's society, compromising attention spans and relational abilities across demographics, but weighing especially hard on our keiki and adolescents during their most formative years. A public information campaign would be a wise investment in our future as a community, equipping everyone with the tools to make optimal decisions about screen time for themselves. Mahalo.

LATE

SB-2458

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 11:34:48 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/11/2020 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lauren Paer	Individual	Support	Yes

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.

LATE

SB-2458

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 4:32:57 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/11/2020 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kevin Paulson	Individual	Support	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

Submitted on: 2/11/2020 10:20:16 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/11/2020 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tatyana Cerullo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Committee Members:

I am in strong support of this bill creating a public education campaign specifically on the mental health and healthy relationship formation impacts of excessive screen time. I'm an attorney and business owner in Honolulu with two young children. I see excessive screen time as a serious issue. The number of hours and children using screens is dramatically increasing. Instead of interacting with each other and adults, learning social and communication skills, playing in nature and moving their bodies, finding purpose and helping their families and communities, learning hands on life skills from mentors, and using their imaginations, they are sedentary and absorbed into their screens for hours. Children wake up with them, use them any chance they get during the day, and go to sleep with them. The effects on their sleep and physical, mental, spiritual, and social development are real.

Many parents think that screen use is good for their children because it means somehow that they are tech savvy and ready for our technological world. However, the research shows that it is actually detrimental. There is a real need for education for parents in our community to limit screen use and to know the effects it has.

My children get very limited screen time and I attribute their good health, robust imaginations, creativity, ability to focus and pay attention to detail, self-soothe, understand emotions, and interact positively with others to lots of time in nature, hands on projects, social interaction, and very limited screen time. We were at a cultural event once in Honolulu where all the kids were participating. As soon as one child brought a screen out with a video game, all the kids stopped participating in an instant and crowded around focused on one screen the rest of the time. This bill is essential to start building awareness of proper screen hygiene. Thank you for your consideration.

Tatyana Cerullo

Honolulu, Hawaii