



July 19, 2017

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 135 (Dodd): Media literacy
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez Fletcher:

I am writing on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, to let you know that we strongly support proposed legislation SB 135 (Dodd). SB 135 (Dodd) would require the State Board of Education to include media literacy among the subjects covered in social science instructional frameworks and curriculum materials.

The diversification and fragmentation of media is one of the defining characteristics of the internet age, and this is especially true for those who have grown up as digital natives. Over 90 percent of adolescents use social media in one form or another, and many use social media as a primary source of news. However, a substantial portion of heavily shared “news” articles are either erroneous or entirely fabricated. This poses a grave danger to the future of our country, and especially for our youngest generations. To make informed decisions about the most pressing matters facing our society, we must have an informed populace that is able to distinguish fact from fiction. Pediatricians know this firsthand: we have seen tremendous harm done by the spread of misinformation miscast as news relating to issues such as childhood vaccination, with the result that many children have become sick with illnesses once thought nearly extinguished.

SB 135 (Dodd) would help our children navigate digital media by including digital literacy, which includes the ability to distinguish reliable and unreliable information, among the social science instructional frameworks and curriculum materials established by the State Board of Education. This is precisely the sort of instruction that California children need so as to make of our state a paragon of citizen involvement and democracy.

Pediatricians across the state urge an AYE vote on SB 135 (Dodd). We thank you for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Patel', with a large, stylized initial 'M' and a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Mona Patel, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Co-Chair, State Government Affairs Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Kris Calvin, CEO; AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne; The Honorable Bill Dodd; Members & Staff of the
Assembly Appropriations Committee