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February 24, 2017

The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson  
State Capitol, Room 2032  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: (916) 651-4919

RE: SB 203 (Jackson): Pupil Instruction: Digital Citizenship and Media Literacy  
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Senator Jackson:

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 your proposed legislation SB 203 (Jackson). SB 203 (Jackson) would require the State Department of Education to identify best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, Internet safety, and media literacy and would require each school district, beginning in the 2019–20 school year, to annually review its policy and procedures on digital citizenship, Internet safety, and media literacy, among other provisions.

The internet has never been a stronger influence in children’s lives: over 90 percent of adolescents use social media in one form or another, and nearly all are frequent internet users. However, without digital literacy education, the internet can be used to cause harm. Pediatricians are especially concerned with the prospect of online bullying and harassment, which has a highly negative impact on children’s social, emotional, and even physical health. The spread of so-called “fake news” also poses grave dangers to the health of our children: tremendous harm has been done by the spread of misinformation miscast as news on issues such as childhood vaccination, causing many children to become sick with illnesses once thought nearly extinguished.

SB 203 (Jackson) would help our children navigate the digital world by supporting the identification and dissemination of best practices regarding instruction in digital citizenship, Internet safety, and media literacy, thus investing in the future of California and our children.

Pediatricians across the state support SB 203 (Jackson). 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 long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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

CC: Kris Calvin, CEO; AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne