



May 4, 2021

Honorable Rob W. Kauffman, Chair
Honorable Tim Briggs, Democratic Chair
Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee

Re: **Opposition to House Bill 1295**

Dear Chairs Kauffman and Briggs:

On behalf of CTIA®, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, and its member companies in Pennsylvania, I write to you in opposition to HB 1295, which mandates specific content filtering requirements on retailers that engage in manufacturing, sale, offer for sale, lease or distribution of Internet-enabled devices or services in this Commonwealth that make content accessible on the Internet.

While this bill is well intentioned, this bill is neither necessary nor practicable. The wireless industry offers products and services to consumers on a nationwide and even worldwide basis. Setting state-specific requirements on devices would be unfeasible.

The wireless industry is committed to providing resources to help families use technology safely and responsibly. Providers already offer content filtering technology that works on smartphones, tablets, and computers, helping adults and children make positive digital choices everywhere they browse. In addition, many manufacturers offer content blocking capabilities within the functionality of the device itself, and consumers can download applications. Examples of tools and resources provided by providers include:

- *AT&T's Secure Family App* helps families manage their digital life across all connected devices by letting parents know where their kids are, manage screen time, and limit what their kids access and buy online. Easy-to-use features include an interactive map locating family companion devices, time limit controls, pause internet tools, app purchase blocking and content filtering based on age-appropriate settings.¹
- *AT&T ScreenReady* is a free community resource equipping parents with the information they need to set and manage parental controls. AT&T is also working with Common Sense Media®, a leading source of entertainment and technology recommendations for families, to connect parents and caregivers with digital parenting tips and resources.²

¹ <https://www.att.com/features/secure-family-app/>

² <https://screenready.att.com/>

- Verizon offers *Smart Family* a service that monitors web activity and sets usage limits and restrictions for each user on an account.³
- T-Mobile also offers similar tools, for example Family Mode, a service with filtering, usage insights, and the ability to set time limits or schedule “off time” where devices are offline for certain parts of the day⁴.
- U.S. Cellular offers Google Family Link, an app for digital security, and guidance for creating custom U.S. Cellular phone safety parent-child agreements.⁵

As an association, CTIA created “Growing Wireless,” a website that provides industry-backed tools and resources for parents of connected children. The program provides information regarding parental control features, parent guides and additional resources for safe mobile device usage. You can access more information at www.ctia.org/about-ctia/programs/growing-wireless.

HB 1295 sets technically infeasible requirements on determining how these mandates would work in practice with the use of applications or within the broad universe of content, from books and movies to music and video, with respect to setting filters.

Instead of mandating requirements regarding filters, the most effective approach for states, companies and other stakeholders is to work together to educate consumers about the tools that are available to them, especially as technology is constantly evolving. The range of choices already in the marketplace empowers parents to choose the most appropriate option and settings for their child.

The wireless industry takes the issue of child safety seriously by offering tools with the capability to block content and will continue to do so. CTIA and its members respectfully urge you not to move HB 1295.

Sincerely,



Lisa McCabe
Director, State Legislative Affairs
CTIA

³ <https://www.verizon.com/support/verizon-smart-family/>

⁴ <https://www.t-mobile.com/offers/t-mobile-family-mode>

⁵ <https://www.uscellular.com/support/linkup>