



**Testimony in Support of S.F. 3933 (Chamberlain)
Civil Law and Data Practices Policy
March 29, 2022**

Chair Mathews and Members of the Committee,

I am here today on behalf of the Minnesota Catholic Conference to share our support of S.F. 3933.

It is vital for teen development that we prohibit the use of algorithms that bring them inappropriate or unfiltered content and cultivate addictive behavior. Limiting the impact of social media provides a solid step towards mitigating these harms during their most formative years.

Ninety-five percent of teens ages 13 to 17 have access to a smartphone, 45 percent say they are online “almost constantly,” and another 44 percent say they are on the internet several times a day, according to a 2018 Pew Research Study.¹ A 2016 study showed that those who spent the most time on social media and least time interacting with others face-to-face reported the most loneliness.² Social media is creating a false fabrication of friendship and connectedness for our youth.

The way the algorithms are set up, we get fed what we see or click on. So, with TikTok, if you linger on a video for even a short period of time, the algorithm will take note and feed you additional similar content. This can be especially harmful to youth if the content promotes suicide or self-harm, which it has been known to do. An example is the emerging link between TikTok related content and eating disorders in teen girls³—the TikTok hashtag “diet” has over 11 billion views.⁴ A document shared with the New York Times lays out the ultimate goal of TikTok, which is to add more daily active users by essentially cultivating addictive behavior through the spoon-fed algorithms that many will say cause the app to know them better than they even know themselves.⁵

We should not be letting Big Tech and their accompanying algorithms shepherd the lives of our children. With the passage of S.F. 3933, we can limit the control these algorithms have over our teens and free them from the confines of social media giants who do not have their best interest in mind.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted, Ms. Maggee Becker, Policy Associate

¹ Monica Anderson and Jingjing Jiang, “Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018,” *Pew Research Center*, May 31, 2018, available at: https://www.pewinternet.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2018/05/PI_2018.05.31_TeensTech_FINAL.pdf

² Summer Allen, “Social media’s growing impact on our lives,” *American Psychological Association*, September 20, 2019, available at: <https://www.apa.org/members/content/social-media-research>

³ Julie Jargon, “Teen Girls Are Still Getting TikTok-Related Tics—and Other Disorders,” *The Wall Street Journal*, March 26, 2022, available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/teen-girls-are-still-getting-tiktok-related-ticsand-other-disorders-11648248555>

⁴ Leonard Sax, “Is TikTok Dangerous for Teens?” *Institute for Family Studies*, March 29, 2022, available at: <https://ifstudies.org/blog/is-tiktok-dangerous-for-teens->

⁵ Ben Smith, “How TikTok Reads Your Mind,” *The New York Times*, December 5, 2021, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/05/business/media/tiktok-algorithm.html>