

Good morning. My name is Andrew Liddell of the EdTech Law Center, a consumer protection law firm in Austin, Texas. I am not being paid to be here today.

House Bill 650 is an important step in ensuring transparency and accountability for the education technology that has taken over the K-12 classroom. Over the past two decades and counting, the edtech industry has preyed on the public's inherent trust in schools and educators' concerns about preparing students for the future to pump schools full of technology that does not keep students safe, does not help them learn, and flagrantly violates their privacy rights.

Compared to the robust vetting process that supports curriculum adoption, where subject matter experts and everyday citizens have a chance to weigh in, and which is conducted in full view of the public, edtech adoption has been ad hoc, cloaked in secrecy, and driven by the Big Tech profit motive.

As a result, students' privacy rights are being invisibly invaded daily by products they are forced to use to receive the education they're legally entitled to. Flagrantly distorting federal laws that are meant to protect children's privacy rights online and student records while in school, the

edtech industry asserts that companies are schools and that schools are parents, so that no consent or disclosure is required to begin pervasively data mining children beginning in Kindergarten.

As bad or worse, students are experiencing acute harms through their school-mandated computers. Most common is pervasive distraction, an obvious result when Google, a company that makes money by observing users' web activity, is given free reign to shape the classroom environment with laptops that serve its bottom line. When a kid spends all day watching YouTube, he's not misusing his Chromebook, he's using it as designed. At the other end of the spectrum are the harms that follow when young children are served violent or pornographic content in response to innocent search queries, or when adult strangers contact children through school devices that their parents assume are safe, or may not even know connect to the internet.

It would be one thing if edtech were like steroids, and that these serious side effects accompanied remarkable gains in academic performance. But student outcomes in math, science, and reading have fallen every year since 2012, when the 1-to-1 movement began in earnest, erasing 50 years of progress. Kids are even less computer literate now than they were in 2018.

Digital learning platforms that may show results in laboratory settings in industry funded studies consistently fail to deliver when used in real schools by real kids.

That's not to say it's impossible to educate children using digital devices, only that it hasn't seriously been tried. House Bill 650 is an important first step in ensuring that any device or program that comes into the classroom is shown to be safe, legal, and effective before it is ever used by a student. These are sensible requirements that parallel the safety and efficacy standards of everything else in the school environment—it's long past time for Big Tech to play by the same rules as the companies that make textbooks, desks, paint, insulation, and playground equipment must obey.

Thank you for inviting me to speak today, and I'm happy to answer any questions.