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# California State Assembly

## PRIVACY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION



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## INFORMATIONAL HEARING

Tuesday, March 17, 2026  
1:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 437

### **Online Safety Controls: What They Are, Why They Can Fail, And What We Can Do About It**

#### **PANELIST BIOS**

##### **Opening Statement: The stakes for families**

Victoria and Paul Hinks, advocates for social media safety

Victoria and Paul Hinks are survivor parents from Marin County who lost their 16 year old daughter, Alexandra, (lovingly known as Owl) to suicide on August 7th, 2024. Both have long careers working in tech - Victoria as a tech recruiter and Paul as a software engineer. Social media played a big part in Owl's death and they are now fierce advocates for social media reform. Along with testifying in the California Legislature in support of AB56, Victoria is engaged in advocacy work and is trying to spread the message of "Kindness" far and wide, as that was what Owl was all about.

##### **Panel 1: Overview of the types of parental controls, challenges, and reasons for failure**

1. Sunny Liu, Director, Stanford Social Media Lab

Sunny Xun Liu is the Director of Research at Stanford Social Media Lab and Research Scholar at Stanford Cyber Policy Center. Liu earned her Ph.D. in Mass Communication and Media from Michigan State University. Her research focuses on the social and psychological effects of social media and AI, adolescents and well-being, digital literacy, and how the design of social robots and AI impacts psychological perceptions. Her work has been funded by the NSF, Army Research Office, Google Research, Stanford HAI, and Stanford Social Impact Lab, and published in leading psychology and communication journals.

2. Lishaun Francis, Policy Analyst & Advocate, Children Now

Lishaun Francis is a dedicated public policy professional specializing in mental health, youth addiction and online safety at Children Now. With a robust background in healthcare policy, Lishaun previously served as Associate Director at the California Medical Association, where she provided critical policy and advocacy support to physicians.

Lishaun's experience also includes time at the Legislative Analyst Office where she contributed fiscal and policy insights to the California State Legislature, focusing on mental health, disabilities, and substance abuse programs. Earlier in her career, she worked as a Program Analyst for the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C., providing fiscal support for higher education initiatives.

Lishaun holds a master's degree in public policy from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Spelman College.

### 3. Anneke Buffone, PhD, Founder & CEO CLARA (Clear AI Risk Assurance)

Anneke Buffone is a behavioral and computational social scientist who spent nearly seven years at Meta before leaving to build what the industry structurally cannot build itself. Her final two years at Meta focused on cross-platform age assurance research across Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp. This work produced the core insight behind everything CLARA does: technical and behavioral influences on child safety must be studied together, using a mixed-methods approach, and that work must be done independently of the industry it evaluates to mean anything.

At Meta she saw where data was missing, what questions the industry systematically avoided asking, and how safety claims survive without ever being tested. CLARA exists to test them. CLARA's approach is independent UX research conducted with the rigor of platform-scale science, from the outside to translate findings into two things: safety taxonomies and evaluation standards that give regulators and platforms something to actually implement, and interventions that help children develop genuine digital agency. The goal is not better parental surveillance. It's kids who understand how their algorithms work and can push back. Before Meta, Anneke completed postdoctoral research with Martin Seligman at UPenn's World Well-Being Project, where she pioneered computational approaches to measuring wellbeing, trust, stress, and empathy at population scale. She created the first public empathy and trust lexica and holds over 1,100 academic citations.

PhD, Social Psychology: University at Buffalo Postdoctoral Research with Dr. Martin Seligman, University of Pennsylvania World Well-Being Project.

## **Panel 2: Industry perspective: how leading companies are addressing parental control**

### 1. Nicole Lopez, Director of Global Litigation Strategy, Meta

Nicole Lopez is a Director of Global Litigation Strategy at Meta, where she's focused on youth issues. She previously led Youth Safety Policy at Meta, where she worked across a number of teams on the prioritization of youth safety and well-being when it comes to building products and tools, as well as developing policies. Prior to joining Meta, Nicole led Trust & Safety at Outschool, a leading EdTech company. She also worked as a prosecutor for many years, focusing on domestic violence, child safety, and community violence reduction

cases. Nicole graduated from Amherst College and University of California, Hastings College of the Law.

2. Emily Cashman Kirstein, Child Safety Manager, Google

Emily leads child safety public policy at Google and is a Board Member of the Family Online Safety Institute and the Technology Coalition, in addition to the WeProtect Global Alliance. Prior to joining Google, she led the policy team at Thorn and served for seven years in multiple roles as a key aide to U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen. She also worked as senior staff on several political campaigns in her home state of New Hampshire. Emily is an alum of the College of the Holy Cross and holds a Master's in International Relations from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

3. Lauren Haber Jonas, Head of Youth Well-Being and Families, OpenAI

Lauren Haber Jonas is the Head of Youth Well-Being and Families at OpenAI, where she leads initiatives in teen safety, youth well-being, family products, and partnerships with organizations like Mattel and Common Sense Media to responsibly shape AI for younger users. She has spent nearly a decade working in the youth well-being space, previously leading youth well-being efforts at Meta before joining OpenAI. Prior to her work at Meta, Lauren was a founder and entrepreneur focused on building impactful products and communities. She is also an active parent to three kids under six, balancing her professional mission with a busy family life.

4. Eliza Jacobs, Senior Director, Product Policy, Roblox

Eliza Jacobs is the Senior Director of Product Policy at Roblox, where she is responsible for our external Community Standards and the internal interpretation and enforcement of those policies. Prior to joining Roblox, she was the Head of Product Policy at Airbnb, joining in 2016 as the third member of the broader Community Policy team and helping it grow to 18 people in five offices across the globe. Eliza started her tech journey at Etsy, where she worked in a wide variety of Trust and Safety roles and learned the ropes of product, policy, and operations. She began her career as a lawyer, practicing as a securities litigator in New York before making the switch to Trust and Safety.

### **Panel 3: Solutions for families, industry, and policymakers**

1. Holly Grosshans, Senior Counsel for Tech Policy, Common Sense Media

Holly Grosshans is Senior Counsel for Tech Policy at Common Sense Media, where she advocates for bipartisan state and federal legislation to help create a safer, healthier internet for kids and families.

She brings nearly two decades of legal experience to her role, having served as a prosecutor with both the U.S. Department of Justice and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office in Chicago, Illinois. Throughout her prosecutorial career, Holly focused on protecting children and supporting families, particularly through her work prosecuting Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC).

As a member of the ICAC Task Force, Holly investigated and prosecuted technology-facilitated crimes against children, including grooming, online solicitation, sextortion, and the solicitation, production, and distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM). One of the most meaningful aspects of her work was the opportunity to help prevent harm before it occurred by educating children, educators, and families about digital well-being and online safety.

Holly's commitment to both prevention and accountability reflects her belief that strong legislation, public education, and responsible technology practices are essential to building a safer digital environment for kids and teens.

2. Sunny Xun Liu, Director of Research, Stanford Social Media Lab

Sunny Xun Liu is the Director of Research at Stanford Social Media Lab and Research Scholar at Stanford Cyber Policy Center. Liu earned her Ph.D. in Mass Communication and Media from Michigan State University. Her research focuses on the social and psychological effects of social media and AI, adolescents and well-being, digital literacy, and how the design of social robots and AI impacts psychological perceptions. Her work has been funded by the NSF, Army Research Office, Google Research, Stanford HAI, and Stanford Social Impact Lab, and published in leading psychology and communication journals.

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