

CALIFORNIA

SENATOR BILL DODD

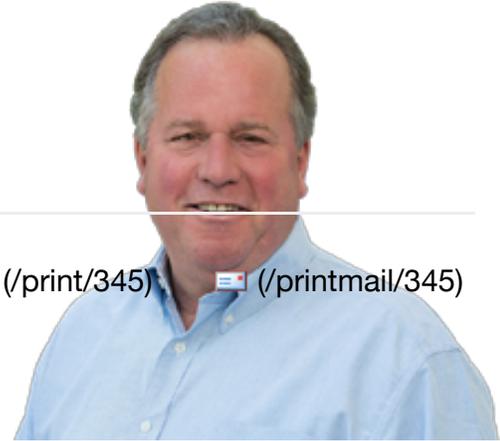
Senate District 3

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Senator Dodd Introduces bill to Combat Fake News with Media Literacy Education

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(<http://sd03.senate.ca.gov/>)

SACRAMENTO – Senator Bill Dodd (D-Napa) introduced a new bill to add media literacy education to school curriculums and ensure students have the tools to succeed in the digital age.

“The rise of fake and misleading news is deeply concerning, as is the habit by some to dismiss real facts as ‘fake news’ just because they don’t like them,” said Senator Dodd. “We already require critical thinking skills in our schools, but they haven’t kept up with technology. Crafting a comprehensive curriculum for media literacy education is essential to combating fake news. By giving students the proper training to analyze the media they consume, we can empower them to make informed decisions.”

A 2016 Stanford study found that 82 percent of middle school students struggled to distinguish advertisements from news stories. The same study also found a significant percentage of high school and college students scored poorly in media literacy evaluations, and concluded, “Our ‘digital natives’ may be able to flit between Facebook and Twitter while simultaneously uploading a selfie to Instagram and texting a friend. But when it comes to evaluating information that flows through social media channels, they are easily duped.”

"If anything, the last year has shown us that the prevalence of hoax websites and false claims will not recede, but rather continue to increase as more and more Americans than ever get their news from nontraditional sources such as social media sites," said Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom. "It's time to acknowledge that since the way we receive our news has changed, so must the way we digest the news. As a father of four children, and thinking about the next generation, teaching them media literacy so that they can be able to discern factual information from farce is vital to the health of our State and Country. I commend Senator Dodd for reintroducing this bill and I support its passage so that we can continue the fight against false and misleading news."

The prevalence of fake news garnered national attention in the 2016 election, where in the final months of the presidential campaign, false and misleading stories from hoax websites outperformed actual news stories in terms of social media engagement. Adolescents can spend up to nine hours a day absorbing media from

these various sources, and this flood of information can make it difficult for the public to differentiate between reputable news sources and false or misleading claims. The practice of advertisements masquerading as news has also seen an increase in recent years.

“Media literacy is no longer a ‘nice to have’ option in education – it is an essential skill for life in the 21st century,” said Tessa Jolls, President of the Center for Media Literacy. “Today, we see that access to media literacy is an equity issue: students who gain media literacy skills are advantaged in a world where news and information are exchanged 24/7 globally through social media and powerful images, words and sounds. This bill is a way for California students to thrive and prosper in a demanding media-driven culture.”

Dodd’s bill, which is coauthored by a bipartisan group of legislators, would empower the California Board of Education’s Instructional Quality Commission to develop a model framework necessary for incorporating media literacy into school curriculums. The legislation will also provide media literacy training opportunities for teachers in California. The bill is a reintroduction of Senator Dodd’s measure from 2017 that passed the Senate but stalled in the Assembly.

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Senator Bill Dodd represents California’s 3rd Senate District, which includes all or portions of Napa, Sonoma, Solano, Yolo, Sacramento, and Contra Costa Counties. You can learn more about Senator Dodd at www.sen.ca.gov/dodd



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