

Hello, I am the Communications Director for the Center for Media Literacy and Consortium for Media Literacy and I am here today to express our support for bills 135 and 203 calling for media literacy education in California schools. The Center for Media Literacy was founded in 1989 in Los Angeles and we have been working for many years to bring media literacy education into K-12 classrooms. We define media literacy as the ability to ACCESS, ANALYZE, EVALUATE, CREATE and PARTICIPATE with media in all its forms.

The Center for Media Literacy works to teach critical thinking skills to students to enable them to better understand and question what they see and hear regardless of how a message is delivered. In other words, we are in the field of education, not technology, although there is considerable overlap. If a message is delivered via social media, or cable news, or in the movie theater, students need critical thinking skills to assess the situation and respond (or not respond) accordingly.

We have hundreds of pages of articles and research on our web site documenting not only the field of media literacy and how it has evolved, but also research studies from around the world illustrating the benefits of media literacy education. We also offer professional development and introductory documents to help teachers get started. CML has three curricula (Violence and Nutrition) that have been designated by the CA Department of Education and the California Healthy Kids Clearinghouse as *highly recommended* for in-school and after-school programs.

Our goal is for students to grow up to become fully informed global citizens who actively and responsibly participate in their democracy. With the internet and social media, EVERYONE is a citizen journalist and this can be very empowering, but we need to teach children to be not only tech savvy but media literate, too. Although propaganda & news bias is not a new thing, media literacy education is a MUST in today's media environment where messages—real and fake--bombard us at an alarming rate. We support both SB 135 and SB 203. We wish to make note, however, that any funding – E-rate or otherwise – should be applied to media literacy, online safety and digital citizenship, since all are needed to provide youth with the foundation they need to relate to the global media world.

Our work has shown that students love learning to deconstruct and construct media as part of their school day, though many teachers are not trained or confident in this area. We fully support your call for professional development training for teachers. And Librarians too.

One last point I'd like to make is that media literacy is not a new subject to teach but rather it's a way of incorporating critical thinking skills into existing subjects so students become more inquiry-minded whether it's – history, English, math, or science... the goal is to give them skills for making wise choices, not only on their hand-held devices, but throughout their lives.

In a recent NPR interview, Tim Berners-Lee who is considered the father of the web, said – to paraphrase -- the current challenges cannot be fixed by tech experts alone, it's only going to happen because lots of people care... It's not just about people writing code, it's about people writing laws, teachers, and people in the street. (NPR April 4, 2017).

Thank you. [bthornton@medialit.org](mailto:bthornton@medialit.org) [www.medialit.org](http://www.medialit.org)