



Office of the San Diego City Attorney

Mara W. Elliott
City Attorney

July 12, 2022

Senator Anthony J. Portantino
Chair, California State Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 587 (Gabriel) Social Media Companies: Terms of Service - Support

Dear Senator Portantino:

The San Diego City Attorney's Office urges you and the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee to support Assembly Bill (AB) 587.

AB 587 would hold social media companies responsible for monitoring and removing hate speech from their platforms, thereby contributing to the safety and welfare of all Californians.

As San Diego City Attorney, I have made it a priority to look out for the most vulnerable in our communities, including those in need of protection from hateful speech and actions leveled at them for no reason other than their race, religion, sexual identity, or nationality. Our Office vigorously prosecutes hate crimes in San Diego, and strongly encourages victimized individuals and groups to report these incidents.

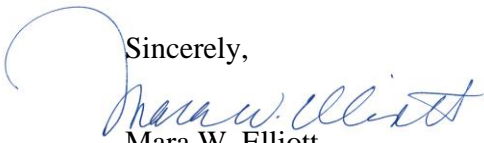
This bill would require internet-based social media companies to clearly post their terms of service and specify what user behavior and activities are permitted on the platform, and what behaviors and content are prohibited. It would additionally require the companies to submit readable quarterly reports to the California Attorney General, to be posted on the Attorney General's website for viewing by the general public.

AB 587 would further require social media companies to disclose their policies on hate speech and racism, disinformation, extremism, threats of violence, and harassment. Importantly, this bill would also require that data be reported on content, users, and groups flagged for violations, and the enforcement actions taken.

Social media companies clearly cannot be trusted to monitor themselves. The State has a compelling interest in regulating harmful content on their platforms to prevent the spread of hate, misinformation, disinformation, racism, and violence.

For these reasons, my Office strongly supports AB 587 and respectfully requests the approval of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Sincerely,


Mara W. Elliott
San Diego City Attorney