



**Testimony of Lisa McCabe
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CTIA- The Wireless Association
February 3, 2017
Regarding House Bill NO. 2459
Before the Virginia House Courts of Justice**

Chairman Albo and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am here on behalf CTIA, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, to outline concerns regarding House Bill No. 2459, which would prohibit the sale to minors of wireless communications devices that contain cameras.

Through wireless industry initiatives like “Growing Wireless” and individual company efforts, CTIA and its member companies have been at the forefront of ensuring that children responsibly use wireless devices. CTIA, however, believes HB 2459 although well intentioned, will not deter minors from inappropriately using wireless devices and is unworkable.

The wireless industry is committed to providing resources to help families use technology safely and responsibly. As part of this commitment, wireless providers, and many device manufacturers, offer tools to customers to help manage their mobile experience. Providers offer content filtering technology that works on smartphones, tablets, and computers, helping adults and children make positive digital choices everywhere they browse. Additionally, CTIA created “Growing Wireless,”¹ which is an online resource to provide parents, teachers and others the tools to ensure a safe and rewarding wireless experience for children. The program provides information regarding parental control features, parent guides, and additional resources for safe mobile device usage.

The wireless industry has spearheaded efforts to offer parental controls and filtering capabilities for customers. For example, AT&T offers *Digital You* which gives parents and guardians information to help minors use technology safely and access tools that will help them on a variety of topics.² Verizon offers *FamilyBase* a service that monitors wireless activities and sets usage limits and restrictions for each user on an account.³ T-Mobile offers a free content blocking service to customers that includes the blocking of downloads, all third-party purchases using a short code, games, ringtones, wallpapers and all chargeable downloads.⁴ Sprint offers content filtering that helps protect its devices against adult content and malware while browsing the web on the Sprint network. The account holder can control access to sites or content determined inappropriate in accordance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act

¹ <http://www.growingwireless.com/learn-engage/parental-control-tools/parental-controls-features-and-resources>, last accessed 2/2/17.

² <http://digitalyou.att.com/parents-and-caregivers/>, last accessed 2/2/17.

³ <https://www.verizonwireless.com/support/verizon-familybase-faqs/>, last accessed 2/2/17.

⁴ <https://support.t-mobile.com/docs/DOC-2745>, last accessed 2/2/17.



(CIPA).⁵ Additionally, many manufacturers offer content blocking capabilities within the functionality of the device itself and applications can be downloaded by consumers.⁶

Although HB 2459 would restrict minor access to wireless devices, it will not deter minors from inappropriately using wireless devices. Minors who could not purchase a device because of this legislation could still purchase devices on “for sale” listing services, such as Craigslist, and other sales outlets, including classified listings whether they are online or in newspapers. Furthermore, this legislation may only serve to drive minors to other jurisdictions, such as Washington, DC, Maryland, Tennessee, North Carolina and West Virginia, to purchase a device.

While the legislation seeks to ban the sale to minors of only wireless devices with cameras, it is important to note there are other devices, such as computers and laptops that have cameras and many actual cameras that are wifi-enabled, that provide the ability to upload and download pictures to the internet.

In addition, most devices sold today contain a camera, so the bill would force wireless providers and other retailers to change their procedures at their retail stores. This also means changes in all retail establishments that sell mobile devices in Virginia; from wireless service provider-owned stores and authorized dealers, to general merchandise stores and convenience stores that sell wireless devices.

Additionally, wireless carriers provide service to customers on a nationwide basis; bills such as this would create a patchwork of regulation across the country, the cost of which would be borne by all customers.

Moreover, HB 2459 could result in limiting minors from accessing 911 in the case of an emergency or the ability to contact a parent or guardian.

The wireless industry takes the issue of child safety seriously by offering tools with the capability to block content and activities online and believes this legislation will not deter minors from inappropriately using wireless devices and is unworkable. CTIA respectfully urges you not to move this bill.

⁵ <https://support.sprint.com/support/article/FAQs-about-parental-controls-using-content-filters/66cdbcdd-881f-4d49-bcaa-c0697d511a13?INTNAV=SU:SP:MVT>, last accessed 2/2/17.

⁶ “How to set up parental controls on Android smartphones and tablets” Geek Squad Knowledge Vault 9 November 2016, <http://www.geeksquad.co.uk/articles/set-up-parental-controls-android>; “Use parental controls on your iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch, You can use Restrictions, also known as parental controls, to block or limit specific apps and features on your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch” <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT201304>; “The Best Parental Control Apps for Your Phone of 2016” BY JORDAN MINOR, MARCH 10, 2016 PC Magazine, <http://www.pcmag.com/roundup/342731/the-best-parental-control-apps-for-your-phone>.