

20 Lewis St.

Providence, RI 02906

March 24, 2026

Senate Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies

Rhode Island State House

82 Smith St

Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Gu and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to oppose S2195, the bill on artificial intelligence companions. I am a member of Rhode Islanders for Personal Privacy.

Although I prefer stronger regulation of AI companions, this bill is flawed in its wording and will not succeed in having a substantial enough effect in reining in dangerous use of AI companions. The definition of an AI companion in this bill is so weak that it's easy for AI makers to evade the bill completely -- the bill only applies to AI systems that ask questions AND give advice AND retain info on prior interactions AND remember user preferences. If an AI system does only some of these things and not others, it will not be considered as an AI companion for purposes of this bill and the bill will have no effect on it.

Even apart from the too-lenient definition of AI companions, the bill merely requires AI makers to design a "protocol" for some specific situations ("(1) possible suicidal ideation or self-harm expressed by a user to the AI companion, (2) possible physical harm to others expressed by a user to the AI companion; and (3) possible financial harm to others expressed by the user to the AI companion that includes, but is not limited to, a notification to the user that refers them to crisis service providers such as a suicide hotline, crisis text line, or other appropriate crisis services.) That protocol does not need to meet any standards and does not need to be disclosed; it's likely to be completely or nearly completely useless. It does not cover many other situations, such as harmful messages expressed by the AI companion rather than the user, or possible financial harm to the user rather than to others.

I expect the bill's effect would be more annoying to users than successfully protecting them against harmful AI manipulation.

Sincerely, Randall Rose