



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors

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April XX, 2026

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jimmy Panetta
200 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 7661 the Stop the Sexualization of Children Act – OPPOSE

Dear Representative Lofgren and Representative Panetta:

On behalf of the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors, I write to express our strong opposition to H.R. 7661, the Stop the Sexualization of Children Act. Our County prioritizes the safety, well-being, and healthy development of every young person in our community. We serve youth from diverse cultural, religious, and family backgrounds, who can face significant challenges from poverty to housing instability, mental health needs, bullying, and social isolation. For every individual, our obligation is the same: to support and nurture them with evidence-based, age-appropriate, and inclusive policies that allow them to grow into healthy, confident adults.

H.R. 7661 is framed as a measure to protect children, but, as drafted, it creates vague and sweeping restrictions that risk chilling the ability of schools, libraries, health providers, and agencies to provide developmentally appropriate education, resources, and support. In practice, this bill could deter educators and public institutions from addressing topics such as human development, personal safety, bullying prevention, and respect for diverse identities, discussions that are essential to keeping children safe and informed.

The County of Monterey sees firsthand the consequences when young people lack access to accurate information and affirming support. Our public health professionals work to prevent teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections through medically accurate education. Our behavioral health teams support youth struggling with depression and anxiety, including those who feel marginalized or misunderstood. Our child welfare staff work tirelessly to protect children from abuse and exploitation. None of this work “sexualizes” children; rather, it safeguards them.

Policies that are overly broad or politically charged risk undermining local control and the practical realities of community-based service delivery. Counties need flexibility to tailor programs to the needs of our residents, in partnership with parents, educators, and local stakeholders. Federal legislation that penalizes or defunds institutions for engaging in good-faith, age-appropriate programming threatens to erode that collaborative foundation.

We believe that protecting children and supporting families are shared goals across the political spectrum. Achieving those goals requires careful, precise policymaking grounded in research and respectful of local governance. I urge you to oppose H.R. 7661, the Stop the Sexualization of Children Act and instead advance solutions that truly strengthen families and protect young people from harm.



Thank you for your continued support for the County. Together we can foster safe schools, responsible public institutions, and communities where every child—without exception—can learn, grow, and thrive.

Sincerely,

DRAFT

Wendy Root Askew, Chair
Board of Supervisors

Cc: The Honorable Alex Padilla, Senator for California
The Honorable Adam Schiff, Senator for California