

Re: Girl Scouts' Latest Business Project: Hailing 5G Cellphone Technology

December 10, 2022

Dear Ms. Chang & Ms. Krishnan,

Your decision, not to mention your judgement, to dupe young girls into selling cellular service on behalf of for-profit industry titan Ericsson Communications deserves attention, focus, and redress.

Not only is 5g untested for safety (it has never been tested on children), it supports wifi-enabled devices that take children away from childhood: cell phones, tablets, and smart watches — all of which are designed for adults, and contribute to a number of physical ailments, including obesity, low-vision, poor posture, failure to learn handwriting, content retention, eye contract, delayed speech, virtual autism, and more.

Worse, you ask these young children to share what they've learned about 5g with friends via social media. Let me underscore that social media is unlawful for 'users' under 13 years old. Most of your membership is under 13 years old. The harms of social media are widely acknowledged, and it is being categorically rejected by households all across the country. Even if you don't have young children, you are responsible for 3.2 million of them.

Here's what you should know:

A recent Surgeon General Advisory, "Protecting Youth Mental Health," provides a resounding wake-up call about increased anxiety and depression among our youth — a trend accelerated by the pandemic. Surgeon General Murthy singles out the role of social media, saying, "these tools can **pit us against each other, reinforce negative behaviors** like bullying and exclusion, and **undermine the safe and supportive environments young people need and deserve.**" Dr. Murthy also points to the role of popular culture and media (which children and teens often consume via social media), saying, "...too often, young people are bombarded with messages through the media and popular culture that erode their **sense of self-worth** — telling them they are **not good looking enough, popular enough, smart enough, or rich enough.**"

Internal industry research has also exposed the risks social media pose to teens' mental health and emotional wellbeing, as exposed in the Frances Haugen whistleblower report. Social media companies' business models are intentionally designed to keep users on their platforms for as long as possible and to keep them coming back again and again. Thus, if a student checks social media for information about a scouting event, they are likely to continue to scroll, sometimes for hours. These are habit-forming products that research shows negatively impact mental health. **Therefore, when you encourage it in any way, shape, or form, you are contributing to a decline in teen mental health.**

Please end this program and extend an apology to your membership for your negligence. Surely, there is another way for young women to learn the science behind wireless technology. If you replace it with another patch, I urge you to include an education on the harms, as well as the benefits.

Sincerely,

Concerned Child Safety Advocate, Maryland