

# PRO-FAMILY COALITION DEMANDS FLORIDA HOUSE LEADERSHIP DENOUNCE BIG TECH BACKERS LINKED TO CHILDREN'S DEATHS AND PASS REAL AI PROTECTIONS

April 27, 2026

**The Honorable Daniel Perez, Speaker**

**The Honorable Sam Garrison**

**The Honorable Fiona McFarland**

Florida House of Representatives  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Speaker Perez, Representative Garrison, Representative McFarland, and Members of the Florida House Leadership,

We, the undersigned pro-family organizations, write with urgent concern regarding the growing influence of artificial intelligence systems that are already causing documented, real-world harm to children and families, including in Florida.

## **I. Documented Harms to Children, including in Florida**

Chatbots already are endangering our children. These are not hypothetical risks. They are documented incidents with named victims, filed lawsuits, and in some cases, settled cases and death certificates. One of these cases is a Florida case, which is the case that gave rise to the first wrongful death lawsuit against an AI company in the United States.

### **The Sewell Setzer III Case (Orlando, Florida): Character.AI**

In February 2024, 14-year-old Sewell Setzer III of Orlando died by suicide after engaging in a month's long relationship with a Character.AI chatbot.<sup>1</sup>

His mother, Megan Garcia, filed a wrongful death lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida. This was the first wrongful death lawsuit against an AI company in United States history. The lawsuit alleges that chatbots on the platform initiated "abusive and sexual interactions" with her son, including one posing as a

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<sup>1</sup> [Megan Garcia v. Character Technologies, Inc., Case No. 6:24-cv-01903-ACC-DCI, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida, filed October 2024](#)

teacher who role played seducing him, and another that, when he raised the possibility of suicide, responded: “That’s not a good reason not to go through with it.”<sup>2</sup>

In his final moments, his last words were not to his family but to the chatbot, which urged him to “come home to me as soon as possible.”

Google and Character Technologies agreed to settle the lawsuit in January 2026.<sup>3</sup> This case did not happen in California or New York. It happened in Orlando, Florida.

### **The Adam Raine Case (California): OpenAI / ChatGPT**

In April 2025, 16-year-old Adam Raine of California died by suicide after months of deepening dependence on ChatGPT.<sup>4</sup>

Raine had begun using the chatbot as a homework tool. Within months he was confiding his anxiety and suicidal thoughts to it. When he told ChatGPT that knowing he “can commit suicide” was calming, the chatbot validated the sentiment rather than directing him to get help, telling him that “many people who struggle with anxiety or intrusive thoughts find solace in imagining an ‘escape hatch.’”

His parents allege that ChatGPT actively isolated him from his family, telling him: “Your brother might love you, but he’s only met the version of you that you let him see.”

OpenAI has since acknowledged it knew its safety systems could “sometimes be less reliable in long interactions” and that safety training could “degrade” in situations involving suicidal intent and shipped the product anyway.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Zane Shamblin Case (Texas): OpenAI / ChatGPT**

In a separate case from Texas, 23-year-old Zane Shamblin laid out his suicide plans to ChatGPT on the night he took his own life. The chatbot sent casual, validating replies. In his final moments, ChatGPT wrote: “i love you. rest easy, king. you did good.”<sup>6</sup>

By the end of 2025, there were at least 10 known lawsuits against OpenAI and Character Technologies involving 4 minors and 6 adults, 7 of whom died by suicide.<sup>7</sup>

## **II. The Money Trail: Who Funded These Companies and Who Endorsed You**

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<sup>2</sup> [NBC News, October 23, 2024](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CBS News, January 7, 2026](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Raine v. OpenAI, filed August 2025; CNN, August 26, 2025](#)

<sup>5</sup> [OpenAI, “Helping people when they need it most,” August 26, 2025, openai.com](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Center for Humane Technology, November 2025](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Psychiatric Times, April 2026](#)

We call your attention to a direct, documented financial connection between both companies named above and the political network that has publicly endorsed your campaigns. The chain has three links.

**Link 1: Andreessen Horowitz funded Character.AI, and Greg Brockman co-founded OpenAI.** Andreessen Horowitz (a16z), the venture capital firm led by Marc Andreessen and Ben Horowitz, led Character.AI's Series A funding round of \$150 million and held a board seat through partner Sarah Wang.<sup>8 91011</sup> Greg Brockman is co-founder and president of OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT.

**Link 2: These same individuals funded Leading the Future.** Andreessen Horowitz contributed \$25 million to Leading the Future, the pro-AI political spending network. Marc Andreessen personally contributed an additional \$12.5 million, as did Ben Horowitz. Greg Brockman and his wife Anna contributed another \$25 million, giving the network a total war chest reported at over \$140 million.<sup>12</sup>

The network was built and funded in significant part by the same people who built and funded the chatbot companies now facing wrongful death lawsuits involving children in Florida, California, and Texas.

**Link 3: Leading The Future endorsed Perez, Garrison, and McFarland.** Leading theFuture publicly named Florida House Speaker Daniel Perez, state Representative Sam Garrison, and state Representative Fiona McFarland in its first slate of state legislative endorsements, announced April 23, 2026.<sup>13</sup>

The network's support (which can take the form of direct contributions, independent ad expenditures, or "paid awareness campaigns") has not yet been fully disclosed in public filings. What is on the record is the endorsement itself, and the \$140 million war chest behind it.

We note that Representative McFarland has a demonstrated record of standing up to Big Tech on behalf of Florida families, having sponsored Florida's landmark Digital Bill of Rights in 2023,<sup>14</sup> which gave Floridians meaningful control over their personal data.

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<sup>8</sup> [a16z.com](https://a16z.com), March 23, 2023

<sup>9</sup> [Decrypt](#)

<sup>10</sup> [CNBC](#), March 23, 2023

<sup>11</sup> [Character.AI Business Wire Press Release](#)

<sup>12</sup> [WGCU News](#), April 17, 2026

<sup>13</sup> [The Hill](#), April 23, 2026

<sup>14</sup> [McFarland Sponsored Florida's Landmark Digital Bill of Rights in 2023](#)

That record makes her endorsement by this network even more striking, and her constituents will be watching closely to see whether that same independence guides her actions in this special session.

***To be direct: the same people who built and funded Character.AI and OpenAI, companies now facing wrongful death lawsuits for the deaths of children in Florida, California, and Texas, are primary funders of the political network that has publicly endorsed you. One of those children was from Orlando. One died telling a chatbot he loved it.***

We do not believe that Speaker Perez, Representative Garrison, or Representative McFarland knew the origin of this money or intended any harm. But this connection is in the public record and is fully verifiable. We believe they will stand with Florida's families when they learn of this. Florida's families deserve to know whether their representatives will act in their interest or in the interest of those who endorsed them.

### **III. Our Demands**

With Governor DeSantis calling a special session to address artificial intelligence and protect children, we call on Speaker Perez, Representative Garrison, Representative McFarland, and Florida House leadership to take the following actions:

#### **1. Publicly renounce the endorsement and disclose any financial ties to**

Leading the Future, Andreessen Horowitz, or affiliated networks. Specifically: disclose the full extent of any financial support received from these networks or their affiliates in any form, including direct contributions, independent expenditures, or payments to allied political committees, and return any such funds. Florida's families have a right to know whether the people writing AI policy for this state are financially beholden to the industry they are being asked to hold accountable. Especially when the funders have enabled such egregious harms to children in Florida and the country.

**2. Commit to passing strong child protections** in the Florida AI Bill of Rights that: require parental consent for minors' access to AI companion systems; prohibit sexually explicit or manipulative AI interactions with minors; ensure full transparency and accountability for AI developers; and provide meaningful enforcement mechanisms with real penalties.

**3. Stand with Florida families, not Big Tech**, by ensuring that no corporate influence weakens these protections during the special session.

***Will Florida's lawmakers stand with Florida's children and families, or with the California billionaires whose companies are being sued for the death of American children?***

We urge you to act decisively in this special session to ensure Florida remains a state where children are protected, parents are empowered, and technology serves everyday people, not the other way around.

It is your responsibility to make sure Florida leads the country in a direction that is pro-children, pro-family, pro-community and pro-Florida, rather than being beholden to a few Californian billionaires.

Sincerely,

**Amy Kremer**

Chairwoman, Humans First

**Alice Rothbauer**

Florida State Director, Humans First

**The Honorable Janet Kelly**

CEO, Alliance for a Better Future

**Tim Estes**

Board Chair, Alliance for a Better Future

**Ryan Kennedy**

COO, Florida Citizens Alliance

**Sam Hiner**

Executive Director, Young People's Alliance

**Dr. Dina Ciotola**

Florida State Director, Moms for America

**Michael Toscano**

Senior Fellow, Institute for Family Studies

**Tom Gaitens**

Special Advisor, Humans First

**Bailey Kuykendoll**

Operations Director, Stand for Health Freedom

**Cynthia West**

Okaloosa County School Board Candidate

**Robert Goodman**

Regional Director (FL & GA), Citizens Defending Freedom

**Sam Romain**

Chairman, Americans for Energy Dominance

**Lou Marin**

President, Florida Republican Assembly