TOWN HALL ON THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Hosted by Congressman DeSaulnier

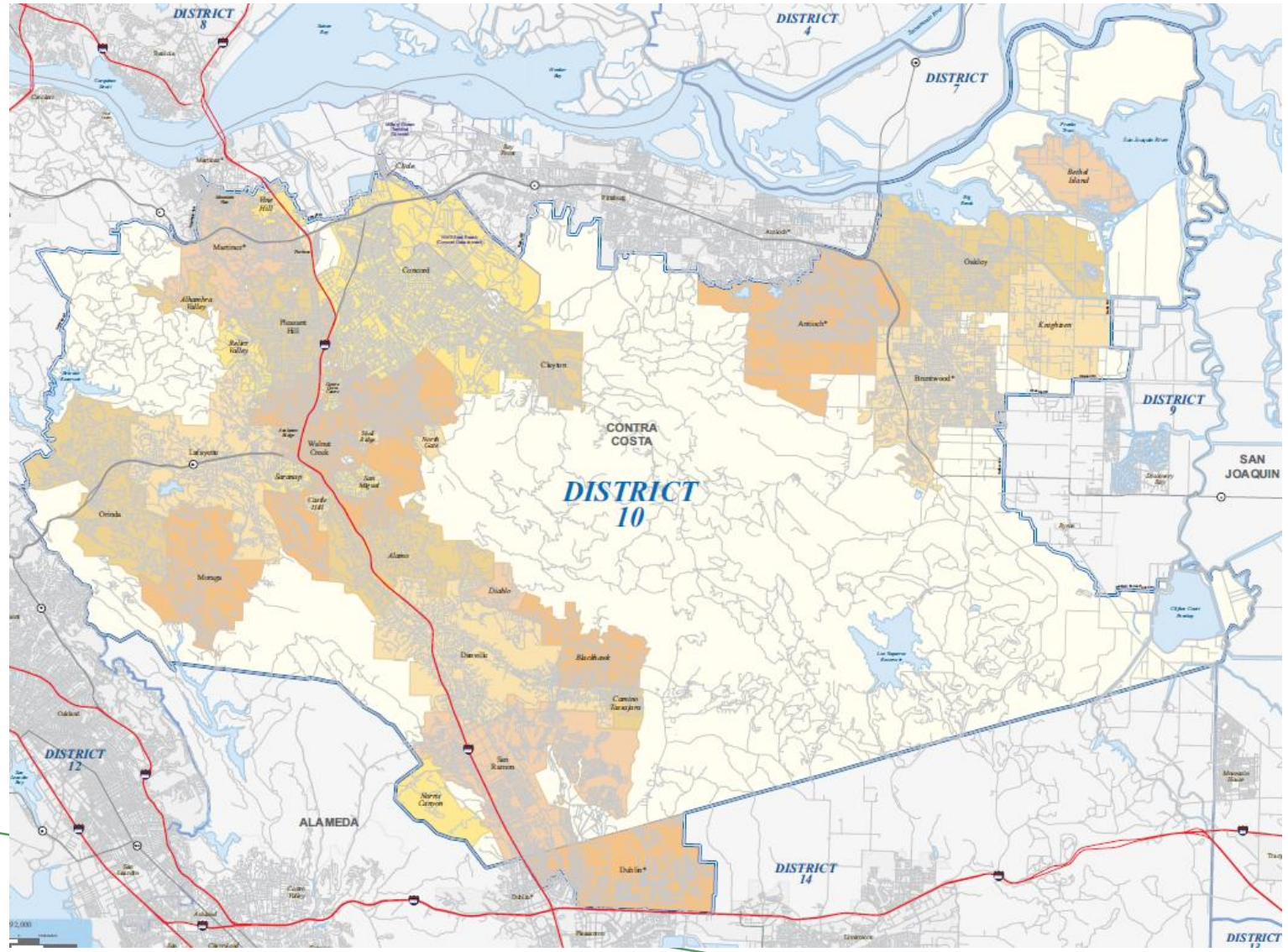


House Ethics: Congressional vs. Campaign Activity

- Members of Congress are governed by the House Code of Official Conduct, which includes standards for whether, how, when, and where Members may engage in campaign activity.
  - This town hall is being hosted in my official capacity as Representative for California's 10th District, not as a candidate in a campaign. Therefore, House Rules prevent me from:
    - Solicitating, receiving, and accepting campaign contributions.
    - Making political endorsements.
    - Directing attendees to websites, resources, or events created or operated by a campaign or any campaign-related entity, including political parties and campaign committees.

You can learn more about the House Code of Official Conduct and how it relates to this event here:

California's 10th Congressional District



CA-10 includes most of Contra Costa and part of Alameda County

Committees and Caucuses

COMMITTEES:

- Ethics Committee – Ranking Member
- Education & Workforce Committee
    - Ranking Member of the Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee
    - Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
- Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
    - Subcommittees on Highways, Aviation, Water Resources and Environment, and Railroads

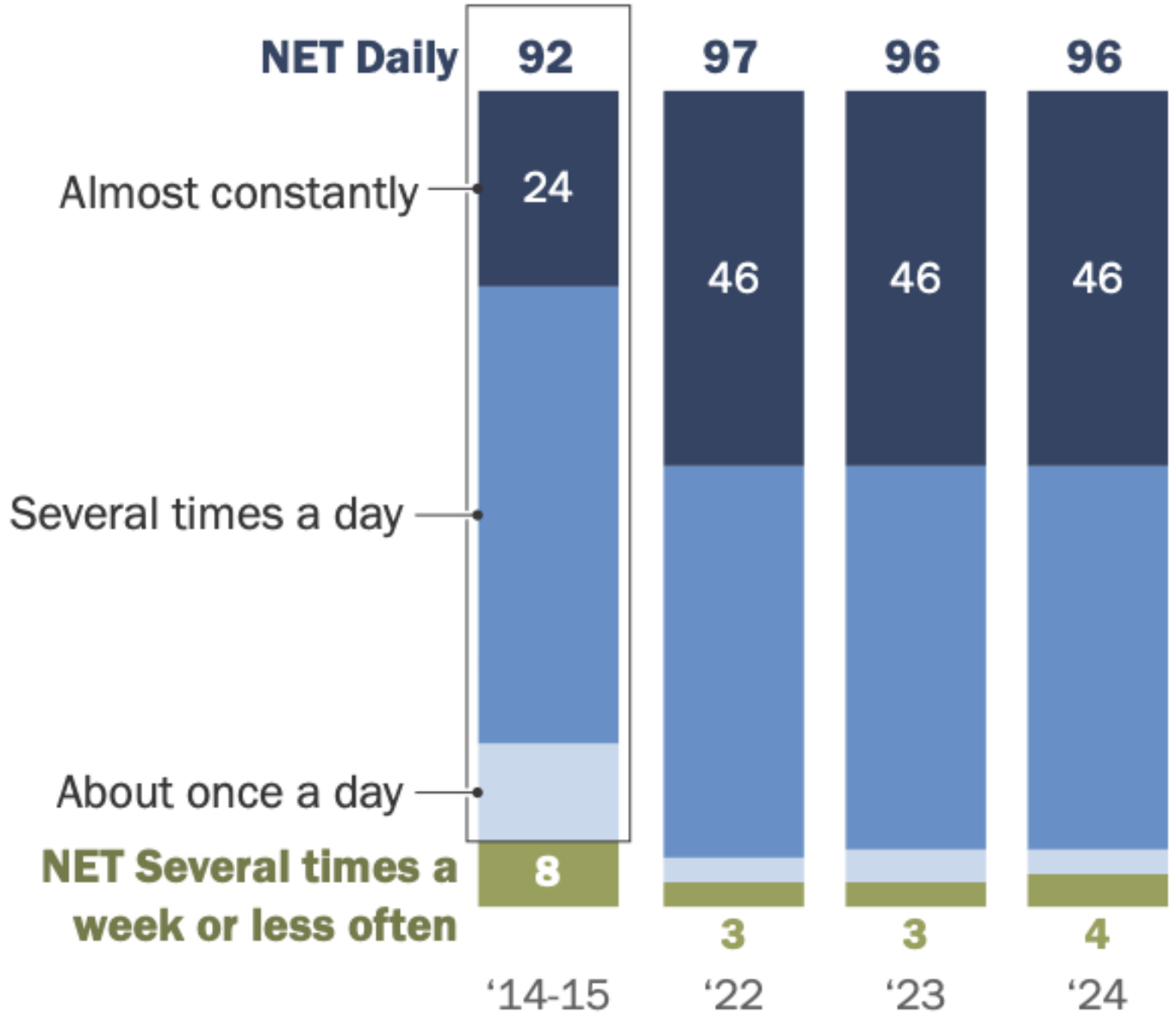
CAUCUSES:

- Congressional Animal Protection Caucus
- Congressional Progressive Caucus
- Bipartisan Cancer Survivors Caucus – Founder & Co-Chair
- Urban Regional Studies Caucus – Founder & Co-Chair
- Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition
    - Climate Jobs Task Force – Founder & Co-Chair
- Gun Violence Prevention Task Force
- Reproductive Freedom Caucus
- Innovation and the Human Condition Caucus – Founder & Co-Chair

Nearly half of teens say they are online ‘almost constantly,’ up from 24% a decade ago

Data from the Pew Research Center in 2024

% of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 who say they use the internet ...



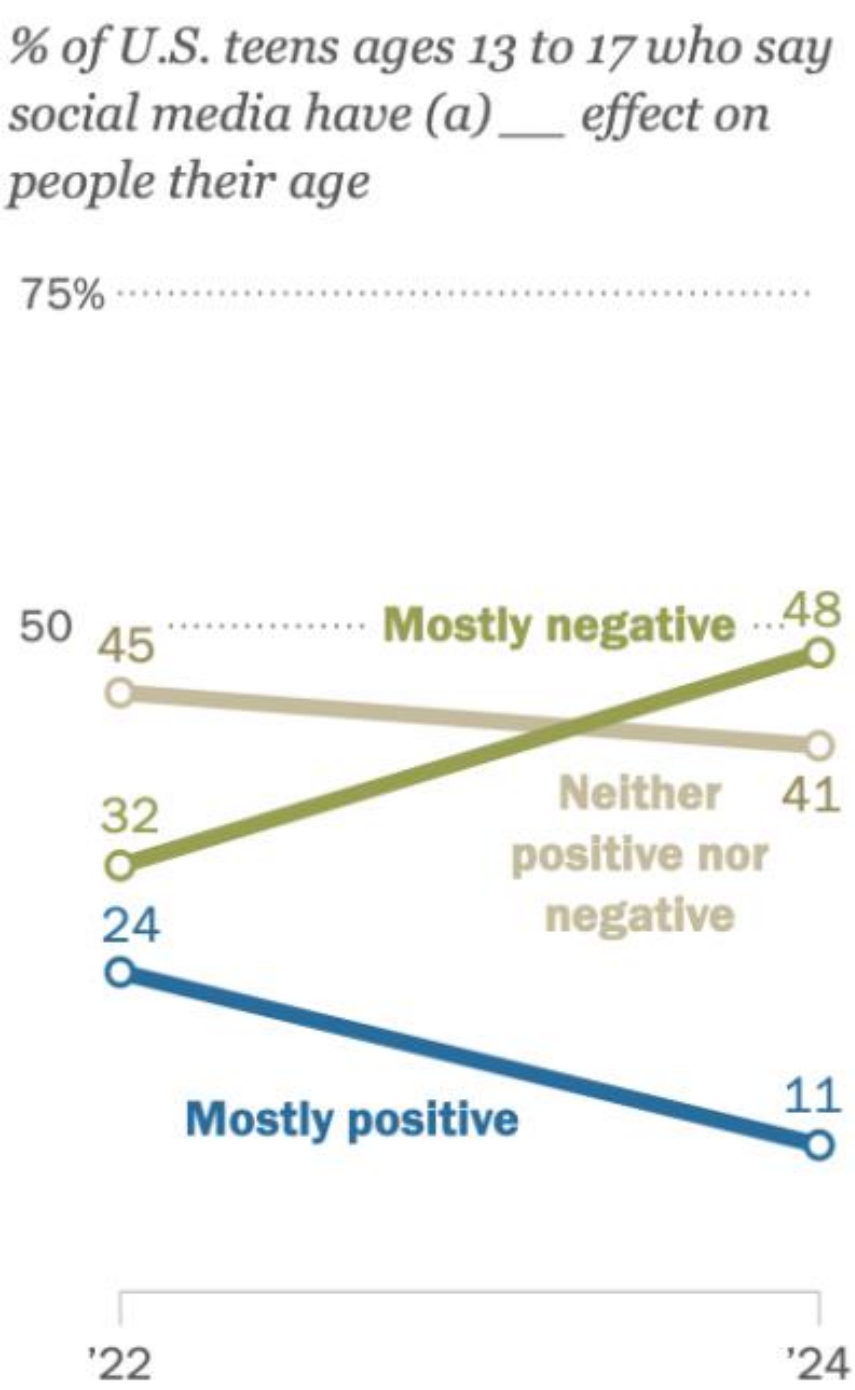
Social Media and Youth Mental Health

- Studies have shown links between social media use and **attention and memory issues, difficulty focusing**, and an increased drive for **immediate rewards**.
- Research also found associations between social media and **anxiety, mood instability, and sleep disruption**.[1]
- In March, Meta and Google were **found negligent** in court for building **addictive features** into their platforms. The court found that features including **infinite scrolling, algorithmic recommendations, and automatic video play** caused the teen plaintiff in the case to suffer **anxiety, body dysmorphia, and depression**.

1 Growing up online: How early social media exposure shapes Children's cognitive, emotional, and family development Abdallah, Katmah, Khalaf, Jelinek

48% of teens say social media harms people their age, up from 32% in 2022

Data from the Pew Research Center in 2024



Congressman DeSaulnier's Work

- In September, Mark introduced the Sunset Section 230 Act (H.R. 10332), a bill that would repeal Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996, **making it possible for Americans to bring legal action against big tech companies responsible for online harm**.

- As the top Democrat on the Health, Employment, Labor, and Pension subcommittee Congressman DeSaulnier authors the **Mental Health Matters Act**, comprehensive legislation to **tackle our nation's mental health crisis** by increasing access to supports like **school-based behavioral health care**, **mental health parity protections**, and **mental health and substance use disorder benefits** for workers and families.

- Every year, Mark advocates to House appropriators for **funding for the NIH** to conduct research into the **effects of smartphones and social media on children**.

    - That letter is led by Congressman Jamie Raskin (D-MD).

Congressman DeSaulnier's Work (cont.)

- Mark sponsors the bipartisan Expanding Access to Mental Health Services in Schools Act (H.R. 4253), a bill that would provide funding for schools to **increase the number of mental health professionals available to students**.

- Congressman DeSaulnier sponsors the Addictive Design Act (H.R. 9948), which would **protect young people from the mental health risks posed by AI chatbots** that are designed to foster **emotional attachment, compulsive use, and ultimately, addiction**.

- In 2021, Congressman DeSaulnier joined a bipartisan letter to the DOJ **requesting an investigation** into a website which provides users with "**explicit directions" on how to commit suicide**.

- Mark is a member of the **Bipartisan Mental Health Caucus**

THANK YOU!

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