



11/8/2021

Dear Senator Ruiz and Assemblywoman Lampitt,

Thank you for holding today's hearing to consider SB 3094 / A 4856 which would require websites and web services of school districts, charter schools, and renaissance schools to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

By way of background, SIIA is the principal trade association for the software information and digital content industry representing more than 450 technology companies. Many of our members work with schools in New Jersey to develop and deliver software applications, digital instructional content, online learning services, and related technologies to enhance learning outcomes of all students. Many of these technologies use student information to help educators improve student outcomes.

While we are supportive of the overall intent of the legislation, we are concerned about two things. The first being the timeframe. The law is set to take effect within six months of enactment, providing no time for the New Jersey Department of Education to create the procedure around identifying and certifying websites as WCAG 2.1 AA compliant. This time frame also fails to provide districts and schools with adequate time and budget necessary to identify which sites are in scope and what the remediation process can and should be. There are many thousands of sites in use across New Jersey, and many are old enough that it may not be possible to remediate 2.1 AA, and even newer ones cannot be immediately updated. We urge the committee to consider giving schools one year to identify which sites are a priority, and develop a strategy by district over an 18 month timeframe to meet the new requirements.

Secondly, we are concerned that the definition used in Section 1.e. of NJ A4856 places the onus on the school to ensure that any sites, service, or product offered to students is WCAG 2.1 AA compliant. Schools may or may not be equipped to do this sort of review and likely do not have the funding to set up this sort of program. Many schools across the country will require vendors to supply a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) which contains information on how a product conforms to accessibility standards and could be a path to take towards transparency and accessibility.

Our organization is dedicated to ensuring all students have access to an equitable education. I can be reached via email at skloek@siaa.net to answer any additional questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Kloek
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