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Chairwoman Kay Khan Targets Advertisers with #theRealMe Bill

New Legislation Incentivizes Companies to Use Unedited Images of Models

BOSTON, MA – Representative Kay Khan (D-Newton) introduced a bill in the Massachusetts Legislature to propose a tax credit to corporations that do not digitally alter models’ skin tone, skin texture including wrinkles, body size, or body shape in advertisements. [HD2881, An Act relative to mental health promotion through realistic advertising images](#), is the first legislation of its kind in the nation.

“Young people are increasingly bombarded by digitally altered images of models in advertising. Some of these images have been so manipulated that models have told us their own parents don’t recognize them. These altered images are not only unrealistic but also unreal in the most literal sense, and they are damaging to vulnerable youth, especially girls and young women,” said **Representative Khan**, House Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities. “This bill will hopefully spur companies to lean into the body confidence movement and realize that consumers would like to see themselves - their *real* selves - in the media.”

“We know from years of research that near constant exposure to these manipulated images sets young people on a dangerous path, striving for unattainable standards of beauty and for many, putting them at grave risk of developing an eating disorder, among the deadliest of all mental

disorders. The good news is that there is a new trend with some corporations pledging to not digitally manipulate images of models in their advertising to conform to harmful beauty ideals. With Representative Khan's leadership on this new legislation, Massachusetts has the opportunity to accelerate this trend by offering tax incentives for corporations to do the right thing with responsible advertising and support the health and well-being of young people in the Commonwealth," said [Bryn Austin](#), **Professor at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health** and Boston Children's Hospital and Director of the Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders.

"While media literacy skills are key for young people to understand how ad images may be manipulated, and what purpose that serves, finding ways to improve our advertising landscape and make it healthier for young people is critical. Representative Khan has really stepped out in front on this," said **Tamara Sobel, J.D., C.S.E., Massachusetts Director of Legislation, Policy & Community Organizing**, [Media Literacy Now](#). "Also, if this bill passes, I think companies would soon realize that there would not only be financial incentives for healthier advertising, but lots of consumer appreciation for their brand too."

This bill would provide a tax credit of up to \$10,000 for cosmetic, personal care, and apparel companies that refrain to using digitally altered advertisements, which are defined as commercial images wherein a human model's skin tone, skin texture including wrinkles, body size, or body shape are changed.

"If you support our mission to promote body confidence through advertising, please contact your state legislators and request that they co-sponsor this bill," said **Representative Khan**.

HD2881, *An Act relative to mental health promotion through realistic advertising images*, is now available for co-sponsorship in the Massachusetts Legislature until June 6th.

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Representative Kay Khan represents the 11th Middlesex District, which covers communities in Newton. Visit her website at www.KayKhan.org and follow her on Facebook and Twitter @RepKayKhan.