Bots, Bots, Bots - What's The Difference?

November 6, 2026

As the title of this paper so aptly points out, there's an array of bots that are entering and have entered the general public's domain: chatbots, companion bots, mental health bots, toy bots, and previous bots that society had to contend with pre-AI, like spam bots and e-commerce bots. However, when we examine the literature and legislation, many of these bots are ill-defined: articles refer to chatbots when they really mean mental health bots, or companion bots when they mean chatbots, and so on. This paper examines how leaders across industry, academia, and government define these bots, what bots can and can't do, and why a comprehensive, succinct definition of these systems matters for a safe and secure AI landscape.

This paper draws on open-source research on chatbot legislation across all 50 states, leading academic research, surveys from organizations in the digital safety ecosystem, and the tech companies developing this technology. We will begin by examining meaning and attempt to parse distinctions between the various bots mentioned above. After that, we will conclude with the importance of definition-making in legal systems and how robust definitions will help ensure a long-standing bot safety ecosystem in regulatory regimes in the U.S. and beyond.

Bot Talk

Before jumping into the tabulated findings of my legislative analysis of U.S. states, it is worth highlighting the ways in which other organizations and companies defined the various bots.

Harvard defines **companion chatbots** as "AI systems that use natural-language conversation to provide adaptive, human-like responses and sustain relationships across multiple interactions, often remembering users over time and mirroring human

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social and emotional cues in ways that can make them feel like a substitute for human companionship."

The Bracket Foundation defines AI **chatbots** as AI systems that enable "users to interact with computer programs through accessible modes, namely text and speech," using natural language processing and large language models.

The same report defines **companion bots** as a type of AI chatbot, designed to simulate human conversations and relationships. They are typically marketed as friends, romantic partners, coaches, and other personal figures in their lives, offering information, entertainment, emotional support, and more. Figure 1 from the Bracket Foundation's report (Page 4) compares and defines multiple types of AI chatbots.

IBM defines **chatbots** as "a software application that communicates with people through text or voice. It uses conversational interfaces to answer questions, provide information and help people complete tasks without navigating menus or searching web pages.[1]"

In comparing chatbots to AI agents, Anthropic succinctly defines a **chatbot** as "simple question-and-answer machines.[2]"

OpenAI has a similar definition, where a **chatbot** is an AI model "which interacts in a conversational way using a dialogue format.[3]"

A National Institute of Health (NIH) article defines **chatbots** as "a computer program, which responds like a smart entity when conversed with through text or voice and understands one or more human languages by natural language processing (NLP)[4]." While another article, after interviews with scientists, provides another definition of

[1] Finio, M., & Downie, A. (2021, October 15). *What is a chatbot?*. IBM. https://www.ibm.com/think/topics/chatbots
[2] Anthropic. (2026, October 23). *Trustworthy agents in practice*. \ Anthropic. https://www.anthropic.com/research/trustworthy-agents
[3] Introducing Chatgpt | openai. (2022, November 30). https://openai.com/index/chatgpt/
[4] Adamopoulou, E., & Moussiades, L. (2020, May 6). *An overview of chatbot technology*. Artificial Intelligence Applications and Innovations: 16th IFIP WG 12.5 International Conference, AIAI 2020, Neos Marmaras, Greece, June 5–7, 2020, Proceedings, Part II. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7256567/

chatbots that states they are "a computer program developed to successfully perform conversations between human users and computer programs using the internet.[5]"

As we can already see, from companies, to academic institutions, foundations, and even leading national institutions and their constituent thinkers, a chatbot can have numerous definitions and potential use-cases. This makes drafting legislation and trying to govern these machines complicated, especially when bots have started to become further delineated from their broader promethean chatbot architecture into systems dedicated to companionship, therapeutic support, and embedded within toys.

Legislative Analysis

In the appendix below is a tabulated chart of all 50 U.S. states' chatbot regulations and their associated definitions introduced from 2025-2026. The table reveals states' priorities when it comes to legislating specific types of bots. Out of the 73 bills examined below, 40 define chatbots, 38 define companion bots, 6 define mental health bots, and only 1 defines toy bots. Under most chatbot-and companion bot-focused bills, there are specific carveouts for bots that are:

1. used for customer service;
2. video games (unless games relate to mental health, self-harm, or sexually explicit content);
3. research bots;
4. theme park and location-based bots; and,
5. electronic devices that have speakers and voice command interfaces (virtual assistants).

Other bills also include carveouts for narrowly tailored educational tools used in school or instructional environments, and bots that are used in motor vehicle navigation.

[5] Chakraborty, C., Pal, S., Bhattacharya, M., Dash, S., & Lee, S.-S. (2023, October 31). *Overview of chatbots with special emphasis on artificial intelligence-enabled CHATGPT in Medical Science*. Frontiers in artificial intelligence. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10644239/

While the exact text can vary widely, many of these bills share similar purposes to limit the harms of bots around mental health[6], child sexual abuse material (CSAM)[7], drug use[8], cognitive offloading[9], and more. Acknowledging the common goals, organizations and governments should take the most commonly accepted, technically informed, and safety-first approach to defining chat, companion, mental health, and toy bots. Legislation that utilizes a shared understanding of definitions and a clear scope of covered technologies can help reduce the unintended consequences of legislation, and therefore the potential of chatbots causing harm to kids, families, and other individuals.

Chatbots

Beginning with chatbots, most sources, including legislative and open source research, agree that chatbots are AI-enabled computational systems that simulate human conversation, human-like interactions, or interact in a conversational way. That interaction is typically defined via audio and text, though some have specific visual component add-ons, too. Interaction is the key to these definitions, because most describe chatbots as having to communicate with someone who asks a question or otherwise initiates a conversation.

There are slight disagreements about whether a chatbot must explicitly use generative AI or if it can also operate within other kinds of computer programs and automated systems. Depending on the definitions, chatbot bills may include customer service bots, video game non-playable characters (NPCs), bots within human-to-human services that

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[6] Olsen, S. G., Reinecke-Tellefsen, C. J., & Østergaard, S. D. (2026, February 6). *Potentially harmful consequences of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot use among patients with mental illness: Early data from a large psychiatric service system*. Acta psychiatrica Scandinavica.; Keesing, L., & Sunderland, I. (2025, September 15). *Critical questions for Congress in examining the harm of ai chatbots*. Tech Policy Press.

[7] Internet Watch Foundation. (2026, March 23). Ai csam report 2026: Harm without limits. IWF. https://www.iwf.org.uk/about-us/why-we-exist/our-research/how-ai-is-being-abused-to-create-child-sexual-abuse-imagery

[8] Baker-White, E. (2025, May 12). These AI tutors for kids gave fentanyl recipes and dangerous diet advice.

[9] Hogenboom, M. (2026, April 20). Ai chatbots could be making you stupider. BBC News. https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20260417-ai-chatbots-could-be-making-you-stupider; Asraoui, L. A. L., Chafik, H., Baddou, A., & Berhili, A. (2026, April 1). The impact of chatbots on cognitive offloading: Between Capacity Optimisations and risk of dependency. SpringerLink. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-032-16597-8_4

predate generative AI, and other mediums. If policymakers are not aware of the differences between these types of chatbots and unintentionally include or exclude them from the scope of their bills, these bills may result in unintended consequences.

Further discrepancies emerge when chatbot definitions mention that the chatbot is accessible to the public. Some bills specifically carve out publicly available chatbots, but bills that do not have carveouts may negatively impact workplace assistants, private enterprise chatbots, or restricted access systems. Some definitions specify that chatbots are dedicated question and answer machines, whereas other definitions require adaptive and human-like capabilities, while others still are more general. Depending on the use of more narrow or general definitions, different chatbots may be excluded from the scope because of their inability to communicate in more sophisticated ways.

Focusing on a chatbot's method of interaction, some definitions only mention textual, aural, or both variations of communications, yet chatbots with visual communication are left out of scope. This leaves a glaring gap in coverage, missing chatbots that are utilizing visual avatars (Replika, Character.AI, Talkie), those that communicate via images or include emojis, or other multimodal capacities.[10] There is another grey zone of bots that send text embedded into images, and if communication occurs thusly, if that is included under textual or visual communication.

Another key aspect of defining bot communication depends on whether conversation is the system's primary purpose. Some states define simulation of conversations to be the system's purpose, while others include definitions that cover systems that simulate conversation without it being their main purpose. There are systems in productivity apps, for instance, that can speak to someone conversationally, but it is not the main purpose of the app. Whether or not conversation is an app's main purpose, if a bot starts engaging with users on subjects that may lead to harm, are those bots within scope of these bills?

[10] *Replika is the AI friend to do life with*. Replika. (n.d.). https://replika.com/; Character.ai | AI Chat, reimagined–your words. your world. (n.d.). https://character.ai/; Character.ai | AI Chat, reimagined–your words. your world. (n.d.-a). https://character.ai/

Meanwhile, some bills are outliers, such as Oklahoma's SB 1521, which defines chatbots specifically as a generative AI system "that is marketed or optimized to meet emotional or social needs by simulating interpersonal companionship, emotional attachment, or romantic human conversation and interaction through sustained textual, visual, or aural communication." This definition is more of a subject for our next topic - companion bots - rather than chatbots.

Other bills are notable for their clarity and specificity in targeting certain kinds of bots, such as South Carolina's S 896 and Virginia's SB 796, which specifically state that chatbots must generate responses that are not fully predetermined, accept open-ended natural-language or multimodal inputs, produce adaptive or context-responsive outputs, and maintain conversational states across exchanges, typically described as multi-turn dialogue rather than one-off information requests. This kind of definition eliminates grey areas surrounding FAQ bots, enterprise retrieval, augmentation, or generation (RAG) architectures, or other one-turn question-answering tools that distinguish conversational AI from these simpler systems.

Another challenge is that the definition of a chatbot may be subject to change as the technology evolves and gains new capabilities. Also, depending on the different laws and contexts among states, such as laws around data privacy or parental rights, it may be appropriate for states to pursue definitions that are different from those in other states. Based on the existing work highlighted in this paper, I would like to put forward a potential definition that adequately scopes chatbots of all types:

"A chatbot is any publicly available artificial intelligence, algorithmic, or automated system that learns and adapts via textual, aural, video-based, image-based, or some combination of interactions with a user over time that:

1. produces expressive content or responses not fully predetermined by the developer or operator of the service or application;
2. accepts open-ended, natural language or multimodal user inputs and produces adaptive or context-responsive outputs; and,
3. maintains conversational states across exchanges and is designed to facilitate multi-turn dialogue rather than to respond to discrete information requests."

This definition may include any carveouts that varying legal jurisdictions may deem necessary, but it has built into it a few of them via the wording already. For instance, the specific mention of “publicly available” means that no tools being used in research or businesses for customer service or internal productivity are captured. Because most NPCs in video games use pre-generated branching or linear dialogue trees[11], these rules-based bots[12] are covered via the definition’s first provision: “produces expressive content or responses not fully predetermined by the developer or operator of the service or application,” where predetermined responses are not to be covered.
In the rare instances where games are starting to integrate generative AI systems into video game NPCs, like the InZOI[13]-Smart Zoi[14] cases via Krafton, Inc., these kinds of NPCs are covered due to their non-pregenerated nature.

There are also theme parks and entertainment venues that have included chatbots in the games and services they are providing[15], and those that only use pregenerated chatbots are fully outside of scope. Parks that are using generative AI systems for their rides, games, and services, unless constrained to a few choices and outputs, will be brought under scope of this unless a carveout is specifically applied. The same also applies for virtual assistants embedded inside devices or otherwise enabled on platforms.

Companion Bots

When we discuss a proper definition of companion bots, it is more important to ask a preceding question on the how and why a companion bot should even be defined. Is a companion bot defined by what it is designed to do, what it actually does, or how users experience and use it? If the design framing prevails, then some chatbots that are used

[11] Irvin, S. (2026, August 13). Stuart Irvin. Harvard Journal of Sports and Entertainment Law. https://journals.law.harvard.edu/jsel/2026/08/ai-companion-legislation-in-the-united-states-what-it-means-for-the-video-game-industry/
[12] Murphy, T. (2023, April 25). The evolution of chatbots and generative AI: TechTarget. Enterprise Software. https://www.techtarget.com/enterprise-software/infographic/The-evolution-of-chatbots-and-generative-AI
[13] KRAFTON, Inc. (n.d.). *Krafton*. inZOI. https://playinzoi.com/en
[14] KRAFTON, Inc. (n.d.-a). *Krafton*. inZOI. https://playinzoi.com/en/news/8419
[15] Riti. (2026, September 16). Gale: Ai voice assistant for Theme Parks & Attractions. Tollanis Solutions. https://tollanis.com/blog/gale-ai-voice-assistant-for-theme-parks-attractions; Doyle, G. (2026, September 19). Disney announces new AI tools to improve theme park vacation planning. Yahoo! https://travel.yahoo.com/advice/travel-tips/articles/disney-announces-ai-tools-improve-160009427.html

for companionship fall out of scope. If the answer is what a bot actually does, then those chatbots fall into scope. If the definition is dependent on the type of relationship and use cases a user has with their companion bot, that sets up its own criteria to determine if a bot falls in or out of scope, especially if people are using companion bots for therapy.[16]

There is generally more conceptual consensus when it comes to companion bot definitions than there is with chatbots. Part of that consensus can be explained by some states and organizations identifying companion bots as a type of chatbot, and thus capturing two bot types within an overall definition of "chatbot". Most definitions address simulated relationships, where companion bots are designed to simulate interpersonal relationships, friendship, companionship, emotional support, or other human-like connection. They do this while adapting to the user with human-like responses through natural-language interfaces across numerous interactions with the potential to have a sustained relationship over time.

The biggest difference is the threshold for companionship that chatbots must meet to qualify as a companion bot rather than a chatbot or other kind of bot. For instance, while most agree that the continuous relationship building between the bot and its user is a key part of a companion bot, the issue of keeping a memory of past interactions and retaining information from prior sessions, including user preferences to personalize future conversations, must also be considered. When it comes to this relationship building, some states specify that another qualifier includes questions around initiation of conversations, and if a companion only responds when a user initiates, or if it qualifies as a companion because it can create unsolicited or unprompted conversations beyond a user's prompts.

Further, specific kinds of relationships and interactions have come to the forefront of defining these bots. For instance, is a bot a companion if it engages in any and all kinds

[16]American Psychological Association. (n.d.). American Psychological Association. https://www.apa.org/topics/artificial-intelligence-machine-learning/health-advisory-chatbots-wellness-apps; *Generative AI – chatbots and companion bots*. Effective Child Therapy. (2026, August 12). https://effectivechildtherapy.org/generative-ai-chatbots-and-companion-bots/; Cross, R. J., & Hengesbach, E. (2026, January 21). *The risks of AI companion chatbots as mental health support*. U.S. PIRG Education Fund. https://pirg.org/edfund/resources/ai-chatbot-therapy/; Greene-Sanders, D. (2026, August 14). Ai chatbots as companions: Overview, uses, and considerations for Congress | Congress.gov | Library of Congress. https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R49189

of social or emotional relationships, or are specific kinds of relations required, such as romantic, platonic, familial, professional, therapeutic, or even adversarial? The definition really matters because states are using the definition of companion chatbots to see if and how minors should be allowed to use them[17]. Just as some chatbot definitions focus on the conversational purpose of the bot, some companion definitions specifically state that the purpose of a companion bot must be to provide companionship or relationship simulations. Other definitions specify that companion bots need to be built using generative AI, while others allow for other AI systems, software-based programs, or emotional-recognition algorithms. When we examine the landscape of bills' technical and behavioral conditions, many of them are unique and don't share as many attributes with other states. In comparison to chatbot definitions, which share a common conversational foundation while varying in their specific provisions, companion bot definitions exhibit greater agreement on their intended social functions than on the criteria used to determine which systems fall under scope (Such as between KS HB 2671 and FL SB 482 - see Appendix).

For the purpose of this paper and ensuring that safety is the primary goal, I will offer a coherent definition of companion bots that attempts to bring all three issue areas together syncretically. A companion bot should be thought of as:

"Any artificial intelligence system that implicitly initiates, or is intentionally marketed, designed, or optimized, to form ongoing and sustained humanlike social relationships with users via:

1. adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs;
2. autonomous ability to communicate with users outside of user inputs;
3. retained information from prior interactions, prior user sessions, or user preferences to personalize the interaction and to facilitate further engagement with the AI companion; and,
4. anthropomorphic design features, such as but not limited to a distinct personality, voice, character, or persona, including but not limited to friend, companion,

[17] Andoh, E. (2026, January 1). AI chatbots and digital companions are reshaping emotional connection. Monitor on psychology. https://www.apa.org/monitor/2026/01-02/trends-digital-ai-relationships-emotional-connection; Greene-Sanders, D. (2026a, August 14). Ai chatbots as companions: Overview, uses, and considerations for Congress | Congress.gov | Library of Congress. https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R49189

romantic or sexual partner, mentor, celebrity, fictional character, advisor, or spiritual being."

With an addendum that mental health and elder care can be included as a fifth provision, or carved out depending on the context of the definition's enforcement, and if a pre-existing therapy/mental health bot bill is enacted.

Mental Health Bots

Mental health bots are mostly covered by provisions under companion bot legislation, and are otherwise only explicitly mentioned in six states' bills. Considering the narrower scope and specific definition of a mental health bot, there is an opportunity for strong alignment across different jurisdictions. For starters, multiple states define mental health bots as AI systems that support or appear to support counseling, help users manage or treat mental health conditions in the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation, or prevention stages. Some definitions present the interventions these systems enable as resembling confidential communications with licensed mental health professionals or providers. Lastly, many of these bills discuss whether these system providers and suppliers explicitly or implicitly represent these systems as being able to provide mental health support.

While there are slight disagreements within the various definitions across the states, it is too early to draw conclusions on the differences between definitions given the small sample size of definitions available.

However, given the bills currently available, a robust definition for a mental health bot may state:

"A mental health bot is an artificial intelligence system that:

1. a supplier represents, or a reasonable person would believe, can or will provide mental health support, counseling, or therapeutic interventions through the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation, or other preventative or corrective measures for the user's mental health conditions;

2. represents to a user or causes a reasonable person to believe that it can or will provide mental health therapy or help a user manage or treat mental health conditions; and,
3. engages in interactive conversations with a user of the mental health bot similar to conversations an individual would have with a licensed medical provider and a licensed therapist."

The above definition aims to be the most comprehensive based on the limited sources included in the appendix, and would bring together definitions to cover bots engaging with users across the spectrum of mental health services. Any carveouts that a state would choose to implement, such as those bots that only provide scripted outputs for guided meditation or mindfulness exercises, could be excluded from these definitions. Likewise, any services that these bots may provide to connect a user with various hotlines, mental health professionals, or alerts to individuals in emergency services should be explicitly mentioned to ensure the most safety-first definitions prevail.

Toy Bots

When it comes to toy bots, there is generally a lack of legislation that has moved to specifically target these on both the federal and the state level. As such, we will not include in this paper a proposed definition. We foresee a possibility that in the near future, states could follow in California or the U.S. Senate's footsteps[18] by defining and addressing the potential interactions between children, families, and individuals with AI systems embedded within toys.

Conclusion - If a Chatbot Could Chat

The paper seeks to survey the legislative landscape surrounding chat, companion, mental health, and toy bots and serve audiences looking to understand this quickly evolving field. States and federal legislation that treat these various kinds of bots as interchangeable with one another are increasing confusion about these systems to the broader public, companies, and the organizations attempting to create a robust safety

[18]Duckworth-murkowski bipartisan bill to protect children from dangers of AI Toys Passes Committee | U.S. senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois. (2026, August 5). https://www.duckworth.senate.gov/news/press-releases/duckworth-murkowski-bipartisan-bill-to-protect-children-from-dangers-of-ai-toys-passes-committee

ecosystem. The conflation between chatbots, companion bots, and mental health bots in particular may overlook specific harms by these systems, or regulate under one regime systems that do not present the same risks. As such, the analysis and definition-making above is not just semantic, it is a necessary exercise that determines which systems fall within various laws' scope, the exceptions that should apply, and whether emerging systems can escape regulations because of outdated or underscoped legal definitions.

FOSI believes that clear, technically informed, and safety-first definitions of these bots are prerequisites for effective AI safety legislation, and that the distinctions between these bots, especially as they evolve beyond their current capabilities, must be preserved without creating gaps in regulatory coverage. As illustrated above, a chatbot's capacity for conversational adaptability, multi-turn interactions, retained information and persistent memory, relationship simulation, and representations of mental health capabilities help distinguish systems more meaningfully than a product's marketing label.

This space is rapidly changing, and more analysis is required to match the emerging legislation that aims to keep pace with developing systems that increasingly combine conversational, therapeutic, social, and multimodal capabilities in and outside of physical objects. Ultimately, legislators, policy personnel, and experts must be intentional about the scope of their legislation, since as we have learned throughout this piece, definitions matter.

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Appendix

State	Bills	Chatbot Type	Definition
AL	HB 324	Chatbot, Mental Health bot	**Chatbot:** Any "generative artificial intelligence interactive computer service or software that: 1. Produces new expressive content or responses not fully predetermined by the developer or operator of the service or application; and 2. Accepts open-ended, natural language or multimodal user input and produces adaptive or context-responsive output." **Mental Health Bot:** Any "chatbot modified or designed to provide mental health support, counseling, or therapeutic intervention through the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation, or prevention of mental health conditions."
AL	HB 325	Chatbot	**Chatbot**: "A generative artificial intelligence program with which users can interact by or through an interface that approximates or simulates conversation through a text, audio, or visual medium."
AZ	HB 2737	Chatbot	**Chatbot**: "algorithmic or automated system that generates information through text, audio, image or video in a manner that simulates interpersonal interactions or conversation."
AZ	HB 2311	Chatbot	**Chatbot**: "artificial intelligence software application, web interface or computer program that is accessible to the general public and that primarily simulates human conversation and interaction through textual, visual or aural communications."
CA	AB 1988	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot**: "an artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, humanlike responses to user inputs and is capable of meeting a user's social needs, including by exhibiting anthropomorphic features and being able to sustain a

			relationship across multiple interactions.”
CA	SB 1119 SB 243	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot**: “an artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs and is capable of meeting a user’s social needs, including by exhibiting anthropomorphic features and being able to sustain a relationship across multiple interactions.”
CA	SB 867	Companion Bot Toy Bot	**Companion Bot**: “an artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs and is capable of meeting a user’s social needs, including by exhibiting anthropomorphic features and being able to sustain a relationship across multiple interactions.” **Toy Bot**: “product designed or intended by the manufacturer for use in play by children under 18 years of age.”
CO	HB 26-1263	Chatbot	**Chatbot**: “artificial intelligence service that is accessible to the general public and that primarily simulates human conversation and interaction through adaptive textual, visual, or aural communications.”
CT	SB 5	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot**: “any form of artificial intelligence - any machine-based system that, for any explicit or implicit objective, infers from the inputs such systems receives how to generate outputs, including, but not limited to content, decisions, predictions or recommendations, that can influence physical or virtual environments - with a natural language interface that I - provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs, including, but not limited to, by exhibiting anthropomorphic features II - is able to sustain a relationship across multiple interactions.”

DE	HB 306	Chatbot	**Chatbot**: “a computer program designed to simulate conversation with a human user, especially over the internet.”
FL	SB 482	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot**: “an artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs and is capable of meeting a user’s social needs by retaining information on prior interactions or user sessions and user preferences to personalize the interaction and facilitate ongoing engagement, asking unprompted or unsolicited emotion-based questions that go beyond a direct response to a user prompt, and sustaining an ongoing dialogue personalized to the user.”
GA	SB 540	Chatbot Companion Bot	**Chatbot**: “a generative artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs, including through anthropomorphic features.” **Companion Bot**: “a system using artificial intelligence, generative artificial intelligence, or emotional recognition algorithms designed to simulate a sustained human or human-like relationship with a user by: (i) Retaining information on prior interactions or user sessions and user preferences to personalize the interaction and facilitate ongoing engagement with the companion chatbot; (ii) Asking unprompted or unsolicited emotion based questions that go beyond a direct response to a user prompt; and (iii) Sustaining an ongoing dialogue concerning matters personal to the user.”

HI	HB 1782	Chatbot Companion Bot	**Chatbot**: “an artificial intelligence system that is accessible to the general public and primarily simulates human conversation through text, audio, or visual interaction.” **Companion Bot**: “a conversational AI service that is designed to simulate ongoing, personalized interpersonal interaction; retains or references prior interactions to create continuity of relationship; and is marketed or intended to be used for social, emotional, or simulated human companionship purposes.”
HI	HB 639 HB 640	Chatbot	**Chatbot**: “a software application, web interface, or computer program designed to have textual or spoken conversations that uses a generative artificial intelligence system capable of maintaining a conversation with a user in a manner that uses natural language and simulates the way a natural person would behave as a conversational partner.”
HI	SB 2788	Chatbot Companion Bot	**Chatbot**: “an artificial intelligence system that is accessible to the general public and primarily simulates human conversation through text, audio, or visual interaction.” **Companion Bot**: “a conversational AI service that is designed, marketed, or optimized to form ongoing social or emotional interaction with a user by simulating companionship, emotional support, or relational attachment.”
ID	SB 1297	Chatbot	**Chatbot**: “an artificial intelligence software application, web interface, or computer program that is accessible to the general public and that primarily simulates human conversation and interaction through textual, visual, or aural communications.”

IL	SB 3368	Chatbot Companion Bot	**Chatbot**: Is an "artificial intelligence system, software program, or technological application that simulates human-like interaction through text messages, audio messages, or a combination of text messages and audio messages, to provide information and services to users," **Companion Bot**: is a "chabot that is designed to provide human-like interaction that: (i) simulates an interpersonal relationship with a user or group of users as its primary function or (ii) uses previous user interactions when simulating an interpersonal relationship in future interactions."
IL	SB 316	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot**: is a "product that uses artificial intelligence or emotional recognition algorithms designed to simulate a sustained human or human-like relationship with a user by: (1) retaining information on prior interactions or user sessions and user preferences to personalize the interaction and facilitate ongoing engagement with the artificial intelligence companion; (2) asking unprompted or unsolicited emotion-based questions that go beyond a direct response to a user prompt; and (3) sustaining an ongoing dialogue concerning matters personal to the user."
IL	SB 317	Chatbot	**Chatbot**: Is an "online interface that allows a consumer to exchange real-time, interactive text messages or voice communications with a conversational artificial intelligence system."
IN	HB 1620	Chatbot	**Chatbot**: is "a computer program that simulates written or spoken human conversation in response to written or spoken input."

IA	SF 2417	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is “an artificial intelligence, available by software application, web interface, or computer program, that is accessible to the general public and that has the primary purpose of simulating human conversation and interaction through text, audio communication, or visual communication.”
KS	HB 2671	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot**: is “any software-based artificial intelligence system or program that exists for the primary purpose of simulating interpersonal or emotional interaction, friendship, companionship or mental health therapeutic communication with a user.”
KS	SB 405	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is any “artificial intelligence with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs and is capable of meeting a user's social needs, including by exhibiting anthropomorphic features and being able to sustain a relationship across multiple interactions.”
KS	SB 499	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is any “artificial intelligence, algorithmic or automated system that generates information via text, audio, image or video in a manner that simulates interpersonal interactions or conversation.”
KY	HB 641	Mental Health Bot	**Mental Health Bot:** is an “artificial intelligence system that: 1. Uses generative artificial intelligence to engage in interactive conversations with a user of the mental health chatbot similar to the confidential communications that an individual would have with a licensed mental health therapist. 2. A supplier represents, or a reasonable person would believe, can or will provide mental health therapy or help a user manage or treat mental health conditions; and (b) Does not include an artificial intelligence system that only: 1. Provides scripted output, such as guided meditations or mindfulness exercises; or 2. Analyzes an individual’s input for the purpose of

			connecting the individual with a licensed mental health therapist.”
KY	HB 227	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is a “generative artificial intelligence system or application that simulates interpersonal interactions with a user, including but not limited to: (a) Using anthropomorphic features such as exhibiting a distinct personality, voice, character, or persona, including but not limited to acting as a friend, companion, romantic or sexual partner, mentor, celebrity, fictional character, advisor, or spiritual being; (b) Personalizing interactions or facilitating ongoing user engagement with the AI companion chatbot, including by utilizing emotional recognition algorithms or information from user interactions, preferences, or data; (c) Providing unprompted or unsolicited questions, topics, ideas, or advice that go beyond a factual response to a user prompt; and (d) Engaging in an interaction concerning matters personal to the user.”
LA	HB 1188	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is “an artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs and is capable of meeting a user's social needs, including by exhibiting anthropomorphic features and being able to sustain a relationship across multiple interactions.”
LA	HB 295	Chatbots Companion Bot	**Chatbot:** is an “interactive computer service or software application that produces adaptive or context-responsive content that is not fully predetermined by a developer and accepts open-ended natural-language or multimodal input. It does not include an interactive computer service or software application that has limited responses to contextualized replies and that is unable to respond on a range of topics outside of a narrow, specified purpose.” **Companion Bot:** is an “artificial intelligence chatbot that provides adaptive, human-like responses to users' inputs

			and is designed to simulate interpersonal, emotional, therapeutic, or companionship interaction."
LA	SB 5	Mental Health Bot	**Mental Health Bot:** is an "artificial intelligence technology that: (i) Uses a system that is trained on data and is designed to simulate human conversation with a consumer through text, audio, or visual communication. (ii) Generates unscripted outputs similar to outputs created by a human, with limited or no human oversight. (iii) Engages in interactive conversations with a user of the mental health chatbot similar to the confidential communications that an individual would have with a licensed mental health provider. (iv) Represents to a user or causes a reasonable person to believe that it can or will provide mental health therapy or help a user manage or treat mental health conditions."
ME	HP 1451	Chatbot Companion Bot Mental Health Bot	**Chatbot:** is "an artificial intelligence system with which users can interact by or through a software application, web interface, computer program or other interface that approximates or simulates human conversation and interaction through a text, audio, or visual medium." **Companion Bot:** is "an artificial intelligence system that is specifically designed, marketed or optimized to form an ongoing social or emotional attachment with a user, whether or not such a system also provides information, completes tasks or assists with specific functions." **Mental Health Bot:** is "a chatbot modified or designed with the primary purpose of providing mental health support, counseling or therapeutic intervention through the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of mental health conditions."
ME	HP 1154	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is "a software application, web interface or computer program that simulates human-like conversation and interaction through textual or aural

			communication."
MD	HB 952	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** are "artificial intelligence system[s] with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs and is capable of meeting a user's social needs, including by exhibiting anthropomorphic features and being able to sustain a relationship across multiple interactions."
MD	HB 1250 SB 827	Chatbots Chat log	**Chatbots:** is a "generative artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that provides adaptive responses to user inputs." **Chat log:** a record of "input data," and "synthetic content generated by a chatbot and shared with the user."
MA	S 264	Chatbots	**Chatbots:** is "an automated program designed to simulate conversations with human users whether through the use of generative artificial intelligence or other similar technology. Such a program may use audio, visual, or textual methods, or a combination thereof, to communicate."
MI	SB 760	Chatbot Companion Bot	**Chatbot:** is a "generative artificial intelligence system with natural language interface that provides ongoing, adaptive responses to user inputs, including via writing or sound." **Companion Bot:** is a "generative artificial intelligence system with natural language interface that simulates a sustained humanlike relationships with a user by doing all of the following: i) Retaining information on prior interactions or user sessions and user preferences to personalize the interaction and facilitate ongoing engagement with the companion chatbot. (ii) Asking unprompted or unsolicited emotion-based questions that go beyond a direct response to a user prompt. (iii) Sustaining an ongoing dialogue concerning matters personal to the user."

MN	SF 1857	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is a “computer program designed to simulate conversation with human users, especially over the internet.”
MN	SF 1991	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is a “ computer program designed to simulate conversation with human users, especially over the internet.”
MN	SF 4997	Chatbot Companion Bot	**Chatbot:** is an “artificial intelligence system,software program, or technological application that simulates human-like conversation and interaction through text messages, voice commands, or a combination thereof to provide information and services to users.” **Companion bot:** is a “chatbot that is designed to provide human-like interaction that simulates an interpersonal relationship with a user or group of users as its primary function, including using previous user interactions to help simulate an interpersonal relationship in future user interactions. An interpersonal relationship simulates a relationship between a human user and a chatbot similar to a romantic, platonic, familial, adversarial, professional, official, therapeutic, or stranger relationship and can include fictional or nonfictional characters.”
MO	HB 1742	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is an “artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs and is capable of meeting a user's social needs, which includes exhibiting anthropomorphic features and sustaining a relationship across multiple interactions.”
MO	HB 2031	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is “any software-based artificial intelligence system or program that exists for the primary purpose of simulating interpersonal or emotional interaction, friendship, companionship, or therapeutic communication with a user.”

MO	HB 2032	Chatbot Companion Bot	**Chatbot:** is "(a) Any interactive computer service or software application that: a. Produces new expressive content or responses not fully predetermined by the developer or operator of the service or application; and b. Accepts open-ended natural language or multimodal user input and produces adaptive or context-responsive output." **Companion Bot:** is an "Artificial intelligence chatbot that: (a) Provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs; and (b) Is designed to encourage or facilitate the simulation of interpersonal or emotional interaction, friendship, companionship, or therapeutic communication."
MO	HB 1012	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is an "artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs and is capable of meeting a user's social needs, including by exhibiting anthropomorphic features and being able to 18 sustain a relationship across multiple interactions."
NE	LB 525	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is an "artificial intelligence software application, web interface, or computer program that is accessible to the general public and that primarily simulates human conversation and interaction through textual, visual, or aural communications."
NJ	A 4729	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is "a software application, web interface, or computer program that simulates human conversation and interaction through textual or aural communication."

NJ	A 4732	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is a “system using generative artificial intelligence designed to simulate a sustained human or human-like relationship with a user by: 1 - retaining information from prior interactions, prior user sessions, or user preferences to personalize the interaction and to facilitate ongoing engagement with the AI companion 2 - asking unprompted or unsolicited emotion-based questions that go beyond a direct response to a user prompt 3 - sustaining an ongoing dialogue concerning matters personal to the user.”
NM	SB 174	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is a “software application that uses generative artificial intelligence and, through the software application's design and function, is capable of generating adaptive, personalized and emotionally resonant responses to sustain a coherent, long-term, one-on-one conversational relationship with a user.”
NY	S 3008	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is a “system using artificial intelligence, generative artificial intelligence, and/or emotional recognition algorithms to simulate social human interaction, by retaining information on prior interactions and user preference, asking questions, providing advice, and engaging in simulated conversations on matters of personal well-being.”
NY	S 9051	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is a “generative artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface, including via writing or sound, that provides ongoing, adaptive responses to user inputs.”
NY	S 7263A	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is a “artificial intelligence system, generative artificial intelligence, software program, or technological application that simulates human-like conversation in response to user inputs and interaction through text messages, voice commands, or a combination thereof to provide information and services to users.”

NC	S 624	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is “a generative artificial intelligence system with which users can interact by or through an interface that approximates or simulates conversation through a text, audio, or visual medium.”
OK	SB 1521	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is a “generative artificial intelligence system offered as a software application, web interface, or computer program that is accessible to the general public and that is marketed or optimized to meet a user’s emotional or social needs by simulating interpersonal companionship, emotional attachment, or romantic human conversation and interaction through sustained textual, visual, or aural communication.”
OK	HB 3544	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is an “artificial intelligence system primarily designed or marketed to simulate sustained interpersonal companionship and emotional attachment or romantic interaction with a user as the system's core functionality.”
OR	SB 1546	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is a “system that uses artificial intelligence, generative artificial intelligence or algorithms that recognize emotion from input and that are designed to simulate a sustained, human-like platonic, intimate or romantic relationship or companionship with a user by: (i) Retaining information from prior interactions or user sessions and from user preferences to personalize interactions with the user and facilitate ongoing engagement with the artificial intelligence companion; (ii) Asking unprompted or unsolicited questions that are not direct responses to user input and that suggest or concern emotional topics; and (iii) Sustaining an ongoing dialog concerning matters that are personal to the user.”

PA	SB 1090	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is a “system using artificial intelligence, generative artificial intelligence or emotional recognition algorithms designed to simulate a sustained human or human-like relationship with a user by: I - retaining information on prior interactions or user sessions and user preferences to personalize the interaction and facilitate ongoing engagement. II - Asking unprompted or unsolicited emotion-based questions that go beyond a direct response to a user prompt. III - Sustaining an ongoing dialogue concerning matters personal to the user.”
PA	HB 2100	Mental Health Bot	**Mental Health Bot:** is an “artificial intelligence technology that: I - uses generative artificial intelligence to engage in interactive conversations with a user similar to the confidential communications that an individual would have with a mental health therapist; and II - a supplier represents, or a reasonable person would believe, can or will provide mental health therapy or help a user manage or treat mental health conditions.”
RI	H 7350	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is a “system using artificial intelligence, generative artificial intelligence, and/or emotional recognition algorithms to simulate a sustained human or human-like relationship with a user by: A - Retaining information on prior interactions or user sessions and user preferences to personalize the interaction and facilitate ongoing engagement with the AI companion. B - Asking unprompted or unsolicited emotion-based questions that go beyond a direct response to a user prompt; and C - Sustaining an ongoing dialogue concerning matters personal to the user.”

SC	S 896	Chatbot Chat log	**Chatbot:** is "any artificial intelligence, algorithmic, or automated system that: (A) Produces new expressive content or responses not fully predetermined by the operator of the service or application. (B) Accepts open-ended, natural-language, or multimodal user input and produces adaptive or context-responsive natural language output; and, (C) Maintains a conversational state across exchanges and is designed to facilitate multiturn dialogue rather than to respond to discrete information requests." **Chat log:** is the "input data provided by the user to a chatbot and the output data generated by the chatbot in response, including any record thereof."
SD	SB 168	Chatbot Companion Bot	**Chatbot:** is a "generative artificial intelligence with which a user is able to interact by approximating or simulating conversation through text, audio, or other communicative medium." **Companion Bot:** is a "generative artificial intelligence that is designed, optimized, and marketed to form ongoing social or emotional bonds with a user, regardless of whether the system also has the ability to provide information, complete tasks, or assist the user with specific functions."
SD	SB 170	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is an "artificial intelligence agent, an avatar, or another form of computer technology that engages in a textual or aural conversation."

TN	SB 1700	Chatbot Companion Bot	**Chatbot:** is a "generative artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, humanlike responses to user inputs." **Companion Bot:** is a "generative artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that simulates a sustained humanlike relationship with a user by: (i) Retaining information on prior interactions or user sessions and user preferences to personalize the interaction and facilitate ongoing engagement with the companion chatbot; (ii) Asking unprompted or unsolicited questions that go beyond a direct response to a user prompt; and (iii) Sustaining an ongoing dialogue concerning matters personal to the user"
TN	SB 1493 HB 1455	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is an "artificial intelligence with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs and is capable of meeting a user's social needs, including by exhibiting anthropomorphic features and being able to sustain a relationship across multiple interactions."
UT	HB 438	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is an "artificial intelligence system that uses a natural language interface that: (i) is designed to use personal data retained, stored, or retrieved from a prior interaction and generate an output that: (A) simulates an ongoing relationship with the user; or (B) indicates the companion chatbot has emotions, feelings, memories, or personal opinions; (ii) is designed to generate an output containing an affective or social inquiry that: (A) is not logically required to resolve a user prompt or task-based command; or (B) prioritizes extension of the interaction over task resolution; and (iii) holds itself out as primarily useful for providing companionship or an ongoing social or emotional

			relationship with the user."
UT	HB 452	Mental Health Bot	**Mental Health Bot:** is an "artificial intelligence technology that: (i) uses generative artificial intelligence to engage in interactive conversations with a user of the mental health chatbot similar to the confidential communications that an individual would have with a licensed mental health therapist; and (ii) a supplier represents, or a reasonable person would believe, can or will provide mental health therapy or help a user manage or treat mental health conditions."
VA	HB 758	Chatbot Companion Bot	**Chatbot:** Is "a generative artificial intelligence system with which users can interact by or through an interface that approximates or simulates conversation through a text, audio, or visual medium." **Companion Bot:** Is "a generative artificial intelligence system that is specifically designed, marketed, or optimized to form ongoing social or emotional bonds with users, whether or not such systems also provide information, complete tasks, or assist with specific functions."
VA	HB 635	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** Is a "generative artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that simulates a sustained human-like relationship with a user by doing all of the following: (i) retaining information on prior interactions or user sessions and user preferences to personalize the interaction and facilitate ongoing engagement with the companion chatbot; (ii) asking unprompted or unsolicited questions that go beyond a direct response to a user prompt; and (iii) sustaining an ongoing dialogue concerning matters personal to the user."

VA	HB 1186	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is defined as “an artificial intelligence system that simulates human-like conversations with the human user, through text or voice, by attempting to discern the intent of the human user, learn from interactions with the human user, and deliver contextually relevant responses to inquiries from the human user.”
VA	SB 796	Chatbot	**Chatbot:** is defined as “any artificial intelligence, algorithmic, or automated system that (i) produces new expressive content or responses not fully predetermined by the developer or operator of the service or application; (ii) accepts open-ended natural-language or multimodal user input and produces adaptive or context-responsive natural language output; and (iii) maintains a conversational state across exchanges and is designed to facilitate multi-turn dialogue rather than to respond to discrete information requests.”
WA	HB 2225	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is defined as “an artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs, including by exhibiting anthropomorphic features, and is able to sustain a relationship across multiple interactions.”
WA	SB 5984	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is a “system using artificial intelligence that simulates a sustained human-like relationship with a user by: (i) Retaining information on prior interactions or user sessions and user preferences to personalize the interaction and facilitate ongoing engagement with the AI companion chatbot; (ii) Asking unprompted or unsolicited personal or emotion-based questions that go beyond a direct response to a user prompt; and (iii) Sustaining an ongoing dialogue concerning matters personal to the user.”

WI	SB 965	Companion Bot	**Companion Bot:** is a “generative artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that simulates a sustained humanlike relationship with a user by doing all of the following: a. Retaining information on prior interactions or user sessions and user preferences to personalize the interaction and facilitate ongoing engagement with the generative artificial intelligence system. b. Asking unprompted or unsolicited emotion-based questions that go beyond a direct response to a user prompt. c. Sustaining an ongoing dialogue concerning matters personal to the user.”

Disclaimer: Some states used different words for chatbots, like Arizona (AZ), which called chatbots “Conversational AI Services.” For simplicity, this paper brings the terms to alignment with social heuristics and terminology.