

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6857

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Title: REGARDING SOCIAL MEDIA AND MINORS.

Vote Date: 3/12/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute (LCO No. 6239)

PH Date: 2/10/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

General Law Committee (per request from the Office of the Attorney General)

Co-sponsors:

Rep. Christie M. Carpino, 32nd Dist.

Sen. Saud Anwar, 3rd Dist.

Rep. Tim Ackert, 8th Dist.

Rep. Roland J. Lemar, 96th Dist.

Rep. Tracy Marra, 141st Dist.

Rep. William Heffernan, 115th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Proposed Substitute Bill No. 6857 (LCO No 6239) intends to protect young people from the negative impacts of social media companies' addictive algorithms. The Office of the Attorney General requested that the General Law Committee raise this bill, noting that the former U.S. Surgeon General has said that addictive features of social media platforms have fueled a "youth mental health crisis."

Both the raised bill and the proposed substitute require social media platforms to obtain parental consent to expose children to addictive algorithms. In response to requests from stakeholders, the substitute language clarifies that the bill's provisions do not apply to internet service providers or games like Roblox.

The raised bill and the proposed substitute set default limitations on minors' hours of usage per day, when the minor can use the platform, and when they are permitted to receive notifications. TikTok recently implemented new, stricter default settings for parental controls, and the substitute language mirrors that standard. The proposed substitute language also makes a small change to ensure that the Attorney General and Commissioner of Consumer Protection share enforcement authority.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Attorney General William Tong](#) states that this legislation is needed because addictive algorithms and social media platforms are having dire consequences on young people's learning, relationships, and mental health. He testifies that our state must act because we cannot wait for the federal government to pass legislation or for tech giants to regulate themselves.

Attorney General Tong writes that while opponents of similar laws claim that such legislation has a negative impact on LGBTQ+ youth by limiting exposure to content from their communities, this bill does not prevent anyone from finding and following users in their respective community. He notes that other laws aimed at protecting kids have been challenged, but that litigation does not focus on addictive algorithms. AG Tong argues that age verification requirements do not pose an undue burden on social media companies, and he points out that the bill requires that the information be deleted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Dr. Robert Keder, Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrician at Connecticut Children's](#) submitted testimony in support of HB 6857 because it takes into account current research on the effects of social media use by minors. He notes that research demonstrates that minors often spend more time online than they intend. In these studies, minors indicate that features like push notifications and algorithmic feed targeting extend their time on social media. Dr. Keder cites a study by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine that supports the use of design features to limit minors' time online. As a Developmental-Behavioral pediatrician who often addresses behavior problems related to media use, he is in strong support of this legislation.

[Kim Rose](#) expressed general support for this legislation.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

REQUESTING AMENDMENT

[Anna Lucey, Executive Vice President of Legislative and External Affairs, The New England Connectivity and Telecommunications Association, Inc. \(NECTA\)](#) requests that the definition of "platform" be modified so that it does not include internet service providers. They also request that the language be clarified so that it does not include websites and apps whose primary function is for consumer transactions and services. They provide suggested language in their testimony. The substitute language addresses these concerns.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Christopher Gilrein, Executive Director, Northeast, TechNet](#) agrees that protecting children is a top priority, but TechNet opposes the approach laid out in HB 6857. TechNet asserts that algorithmically curated feeds are not inherently harmful, but rather help connect users with high-quality content and avoid inappropriate content. They testify that age verification technology is not accurate enough to implement the mandate in HB 6857. TechNet also questions how verifiable parental consent can be obtained in practice. In addition, TechNet argues that HB 6857 raises First Amendment concerns in that it

impermissibly burdens adults' access to lawful content and minors' ability to access and share information. They cite challenges to similar legislation in California and New York.

Reported by: Betsy Francolino

Date: 3/17/2025