

# **General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

**Bill No.:** SB-1295

AN ACT CONCERNING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND ONLINE

**Title:** SERVICES, PRODUCTS AND FEATURES.

**Vote Date:** 3/21/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute (LCO 6091)

**PH Date:** 2/19/2025

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

General Law Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

The General Law Committee raised this bill with the intent of making updates to the Connecticut Data Privacy Act (CTDPA) that better protect minors from harm online. In order to provide increased clarity, the raised bill updates the definition of "heightened risk of harm to minors" to specify that it includes both physical *and* mental health harms. Given public attention to social media platforms' addictive features, SB 1295 prohibits platforms from using features that are designed to sustain or increase minors' use of their platform. Current law already requires social media platforms and other data controllers to perform assessments of risk to minors and create mitigation plans; the raised bill requires data controllers to disclose mitigation plans to the Office of the Attorney General.

## **SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:**

Proposed Substitute Bill 1295 (LCO 6091) has an intent similar to the original raised bill; it updates and clarifies language based on consultation with various stakeholders.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

[Attorney General William Tong](#) supports this bill and submitted written testimony detailing what each section does and why it is needed. He states that the updates it makes to the CTDPA will help protect minors from harmful online practices. Enhanced reporting requirements allow the Office of the Attorney General to ensure that companies take these proposed revisions seriously. He suggests that additional legislation strengthen protections around minors' geolocation data.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

[Carmen Clarkin, Research Policy Associate, Connecticut Voices for Children](#) supports this bill due its goal to provide a safer and more transparent digital environment for minors. Her testimony cites the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's [research](#) formally recognizing "social media as a potential risk to youth mental health, and urging stronger regulations to protect minors due to where they are developmentally." She believes this legislation approaches this issue in a way that allows minors to form online connections while also prioritizing their mental health and safety. She adds that it helps take the mental load off parents who may struggle with monitoring the social media usage of their children.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

[Brianna January, Director of Government Relations, Chamber of Progress](#) opposes this bill, arguing that it may compromise online privacy and prohibit online services from offering algorithmically curated feeds to minors. She believes that it has the potential to strip away media platforms' ability to protect marginalized young people and notes that other related legislation has been struck down on First Amendment grounds.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS:**

[Christopher Gilrein, Executive Director, Northeast, TechNet](#) submitted comments expressing general support for the legislation's intent but also suggesting three changes:

- (1) TechNet thinks the requirements in Section 3 are already covered in the state's current data privacy statutes.
- (2) They request that the committee strike the proposed new language in lines 136-141 to avoid potential compliance issues.
- (3) They suggest adding the word "significant" before "harm to the physical or mental health of minors."

[Francis Pickering, Executive Director, Western CT Council of Governments](#) commented that the scope of this bill needs to be expanded beyond just youth. He thinks that there should be amendments that prohibit stock and cryptocurrency market manipulation and that mandate further media transparency when promoting investments online.

[Christopher Davis, VP Public Policy, CBIA](#) made general comments that express interest in continuing conversations about the bill's language so that compliance can be improved.

**Reported by: Nicole Chambrello**

**Date: March 25, 2025**