



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 179

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5037

House of Representatives, March 26, 2026

The Committee on General Law reported through REP. LEMAR of the 96th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT PROMOTING THE SAFETY OF MINORS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2028*) (a) As used in this section:

2 (1) "Covered minor" means any covered user who is younger than
3 eighteen years of age;

4 (2) "Covered operator" (A) means any operator who operates or
5 provides a covered platform, and (B) does not include the federal
6 government, any state or municipal government or any agency or
7 instrumentality of the federal government or of any state or municipal
8 government;

9 (3) "Covered platform" (A) means any platform that, as a significant
10 part of the services offered, recommends, selects or prioritizes for
11 display, either concurrently or sequentially, media items generated or
12 shared on a platform by users of such platform, and (B) does not include

13 any platform that (i) primarily facilitates the sale of goods, or (ii) is used
14 solely for educational purposes pursuant to a contract required under
15 section 10-234bb of the general statutes;

16 (4) "Covered user" means any user of a covered platform in this state
17 who is not acting as the covered operator, or as an agent or affiliate of
18 the covered operator, of the covered platform;

19 (5) "Media item" means any text, image or video;

20 (6) "Operator" means any individual, corporation, limited liability
21 company, partnership, limited partnership, limited liability partnership,
22 association, joint stock company, unincorporated organization or other
23 legal entity that operates or provides a platform;

24 (7) "Platform" means any Internet web site, online service, online
25 application, mobile application or social media platform, or any portion
26 thereof; and

27 (8) "Sensitive content" means any content that the covered operator
28 of a covered platform deems to be in violation of the community
29 standards, or any similar guidelines or standards, such covered operator
30 has established for the covered platform.

31 (b) (1) No covered operator of a covered platform shall allow a
32 covered user to access any portion of the covered platform that
33 recommends, selects or prioritizes for display, either concurrently or
34 sequentially, media items generated or shared by users of such covered
35 platform if such recommendation, selection or prioritization is based, in
36 whole or in part, on any information associated with the covered user
37 or such covered user's device, unless:

38 (A) (i) The covered operator has used commercially reasonable and
39 technically feasible methods to determine that the covered user is not a
40 covered minor; or

41 (ii) If the covered user is a covered minor, the covered operator has
42 obtained verifiable consent from the covered minor's parent or legal

43 guardian to recommend, select or prioritize media items for such
44 covered minor in the manner set forth in this subdivision;

45 (B) The recommendation, selection or prioritization (i) is based on
46 information that is not persistently associated with the covered user or
47 the covered user's device, and (ii) does not concern the covered user's
48 previous interactions with media items generated or shared by other
49 users of such covered platform;

50 (C) The recommendation, selection or prioritization is based on (i)
51 privacy or accessibility settings selected by the covered user, or (ii)
52 technical information concerning the covered user's device;

53 (D) The covered user has expressly and unambiguously requested
54 the display, blocking, prioritization or deprioritization of any specific
55 media item, media items from a specific author, creator or poster to
56 whom, or source to which, the covered user has subscribed or media
57 items shared by users to a specific page or group to which the covered
58 user has subscribed;

59 (E) The recommended, selected or prioritized media item is a direct
60 and private communication;

61 (F) The media item is recommended, selected or prioritized solely in
62 response to a specific search inquiry made by the covered user;

63 (G) The media item is recommended, selected or prioritized for
64 display solely because the media item (i) immediately follows any other
65 media item in a preexisting sequence, and (ii) is from the same author,
66 creator, poster or source; or

67 (H) The recommendation, selection or prioritization is necessary to
68 comply with any other provision of this section.

69 (2) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, a
70 covered operator that has used commercially reasonable and technically
71 feasible methods to determine a covered user's age and is unable to
72 determine whether the covered user is a covered minor shall presume

73 that such covered user is not a covered minor for the purposes of this
74 subsection.

75 (B) A covered operator shall treat a covered user as a covered minor
76 if the covered operator obtains actual knowledge that the covered user
77 is a covered minor.

78 (3) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision:

79 (i) No information that is collected for the purpose of determining a
80 covered user's age under this subsection shall be used for any other
81 purpose, and such information shall be deleted immediately after an
82 attempt is made to determine the covered user's age; and

83 (ii) No information that is collected for the purpose of obtaining
84 verifiable consent from a covered minor's parent or legal guardian shall
85 be used for any other purpose, and such information shall be deleted
86 immediately after an attempt is made to obtain such verifiable consent.

87 (B) Any information that is collected for any purpose set forth in
88 subparagraph (A) of this subdivision may be used or retained if such
89 use or retention is necessary to comply with any federal law or
90 regulation or any other law or regulation of this state.

91 (4) No covered operator shall withhold or degrade, or reduce the
92 quality or increase the price of, any product, service or feature due to
93 the prohibition against recommending, selecting or prioritizing media
94 items in the manner set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection, unless
95 such withholding, degradation, reduction or increase is necessary for
96 such covered operator to comply with the provisions of this subsection.

97 (5) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit any
98 covered operator from taking any action to restrict access to, or the
99 availability of, any media item that such covered operator in good faith
100 considers to be obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent,
101 harassing or otherwise objectionable, regardless of whether such media
102 item is protected under the Constitution of the state or the Constitution
103 of the United States.

104 (c) (1) (A) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, the
105 covered operator of a covered platform shall ensure that the covered
106 platform displays a clear and conspicuous warning, in black lettering
107 appearing against a white background and enclosed by a black border,
108 that reads:

109 "The Surgeon General has warned that while social media may have
110 benefits for some young users, social media is associated with
111 significant mental health harms and has not been proven safe for young
112 users."

113 (B) The covered operator of a covered platform shall ensure that, with
114 respect to each day on which a covered user uses the covered platform,
115 the warning required under subparagraph (A) of this subdivision is
116 displayed to the covered user (i) when such covered user first accesses
117 such covered platform on such day, in which case such warning shall (I)
118 occupy at least seventy-five per cent of the screen or window by which
119 such covered user accesses such covered platform on such day, and (II)
120 be displayed continuously for a period of at least thirty seconds without
121 allowing such covered user to dismiss such warning or shorten such
122 period, and (ii) immediately after such covered user has used such
123 covered platform for three continuous or noncontinuous hours during
124 such day, and immediately after each additional continuous or
125 noncontinuous hour of use during such day, in which case such warning
126 shall (I) occupy at least twenty-five per cent of the screen or window by
127 which such covered user has accessed such covered platform during
128 such day, and (II) be displayed continuously for a period of at least ten
129 seconds unless the covered user affirmatively dismisses such warning
130 by clicking on a conspicuous "X" icon.

131 (2) No covered operator shall be required to display the warning
132 required under subdivision (1) of this subsection to any covered user
133 whom the covered operator has reasonably determined is not a covered
134 minor.

135 (d) (1) No covered operator shall send any notification to a covered
136 minor concerning any recommendation, selection or prioritization

137 made in the manner set forth in subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this
138 section, unless:

139 (A) Such notification is sent to the covered minor during the hours
140 between eight o'clock a.m. and nine o'clock p.m. eastern time; or

141 (B) The covered operator has obtained verifiable consent from the
142 covered minor's parent or legal guardian to send notifications to such
143 covered minor outside of the time frame set forth in subparagraph (A)
144 of this subdivision.

145 (2) Each covered operator shall:

146 (A) As a default setting for such covered operator's covered platform
147 and unless otherwise required by a covered minor's verified parent or
148 legal guardian pursuant to subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, (i)
149 prevent the covered minor from accessing or receiving any notification
150 described in subdivision (1) of this subsection outside of the time frame
151 set forth in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (1) of this subsection, (ii)
152 limit the covered minor's access to any portion of such covered
153 operator's covered platform that recommends, selects or prioritizes
154 media items in the manner set forth in subdivision (1) of subsection (b)
155 of this section to a maximum period of one hour per day, (iii) set the
156 covered minor's covered platform account to a mode that does not allow
157 users, other than users to whom such covered minor is connected, to
158 view or respond to content posted by, or chat or exchange messages
159 with, such covered minor, and (iv) prevent the covered minor from
160 accessing, viewing or receiving sensitive content; and

161 (B) Establish and maintain a mechanism by which a covered minor's
162 verified parent or legal guardian may require such covered operator to
163 (i) prevent the covered minor from accessing or receiving any
164 notification described in subdivision (1) of this subsection outside of a
165 time frame specified by such parent or legal guardian, (ii) limit the
166 covered minor's access to any portion of such covered operator's
167 covered platform that recommends, selects or prioritizes media items in
168 the manner set forth in subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section

169 to a maximum daily period specified by such parent or legal guardian,
170 or (iii) set the covered minor's covered platform account to a mode that
171 does not allow users, other than users to whom such covered minor is
172 connected, to view or respond to content posted by, or chat or exchange
173 messages with, such covered minor.

174 (e) Not later than March 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, each
175 covered operator shall publicly disclose, in a form and manner
176 prescribed by the Attorney General, the following information for the
177 preceding calendar year:

178 (1) The total number of covered users who used the covered
179 operator's covered platform during such year;

180 (2) The portion of the total number of covered users described in
181 subdivision (1) of this subsection for whom the covered operator
182 obtained verifiable consent from a parent or legal guardian under
183 subparagraph (A)(ii) of subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section;

184 (3) The portion of the total number of covered users described in
185 subdivision (1) of this subsection for whom the default settings set forth
186 in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of this section
187 were enabled, and the portion of such total number of covered users for
188 whom such default settings were not enabled; and

189 (4) The average amount of time per day that covered users used the
190 covered operator's covered platform, broken down by user age and
191 hour of day.

192 (f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to (1) require a covered
193 operator to provide a covered minor's parent or legal guardian with
194 access to, or control over, the covered minor's covered platform account
195 or any data associated therewith, unless provision of such access or
196 control is specifically required by this section, or (2) impose liability for
197 any commercial activity or action by a covered operator subject to 15
198 USC 6501, as amended from time to time, that is inconsistent with the
199 manner in which such commercial activity or action is treated under 15

200 USC 6502, as amended from time to time.

201 (g) A violation of any provision of subsections (b) to (e), inclusive, of
202 this section shall be deemed an unfair or deceptive trade practice under
203 subsection (a) of section 42-110b of the general statutes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	January 1, 2028	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Subsec. (b)(1)(D), provisions were rewritten for clarity; and in Subsec. (g), "any provision of" was added for clarity.

GL Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill makes various changes regarding social media and minors, including creating a new unfair trade practice violation resulting in no fiscal impact to the state. The Department of Consumer Protection investigates unfair trade practice violations and has the resources and expertise to meet the requirements of the bill.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5037*****AN ACT PROMOTING THE SAFETY OF MINORS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill generally requires covered platform operators, before giving a user access to any portion of the platform that uses a personalized algorithm, to (1) verify a covered user's age and (2) if the user is a minor, receive permission from the minor's parent or legal guardian. It also sets certain conditions where age verification is not required (for example, for media that immediately follows another item in a preexisting sequence from the same author, creator, or poster).

Under the bill, covered operators must also give covered minors certain warnings related to mental health (1) when the minor signs on each day, (2) after three hours of use, and (3) after each subsequent hour.

The bill also limits covered operators to only sending a minor notifications with any personalized algorithmic suggestions between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time, unless a parent or legal guardian consents to the notifications at other times. It also generally requires operators to make the platform's default setting, among others, one that limits the minor's access to any portion of the platform that uses a personalized algorithm to one hour per day.

Under the bill, covered operators must also annually disclose certain information for the previous calendar year. This includes providing certain statistics about users, including the number that obtained parental or guardian consent and used the default setting, as well as the average amount of time users spent on the platform.

The bill makes a violation of its provisions a violation of the

Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act (CUTPA, see BACKGROUND).

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2028

DEFINITIONS

Under the bill, a “covered user” is any covered platform user in Connecticut who is not acting as the covered platform operator, or the operator’s agent or affiliate. A “covered minor” is a covered user under age 18.

A “platform” is any Internet website, online service, online application, mobile application, or social media platform, or any part of them.

A “social media platform” is a public or semi-public Internet-based service or application that:

1. is used by a consumer in Connecticut;
2. is primarily intended to connect and allow users to socially interact within the service or application; and
3. enables a user to (a) create a public or semi-public profile for signing into and using the service or application; (b) populate a public list of other users with whom the user shares a social connection within the service or application; and (c) create or post content that other users can view, including on message boards, in chat rooms, or through a landing page or main feed that shows the user content generated by other users.

A social media platform is not a public or semi-public Internet-based service or application that:

1. exclusively provides e-mail or direct messaging services;
2. primarily consists of news, sports, entertainment, interactive video games, electronic commerce, or content preselected by the provider, or for which any chat, comments, or interactive

functionality is incidental to, directly related to, or dependent on providing the content; or

3. is used by and under an educational entity's direction, including a learning management system or a student engagement program.

A "covered platform" is any platform that, as a significant part of the services offered by that portion, offers, recommends, selects, or prioritizes (uses an algorithm) displaying certain media items based on information associated with the user or his or her device (personalized). These media items are those generated or shared by platform users for display either concurrently or sequentially. A covered platform does not include any platform that primarily facilitates the sales of goods or is used solely for educational purposes under a contract required by law between a board of education and a contractor if sharing student data with the contractor.

A "covered operator" is any operator (an individual or legal entity) who operates or provides a covered platform, but does not include the federal government, any state or municipal government, or any of their agencies or instrumentalities.

AGE VERIFICATION

The bill generally requires covered platform operators to verify a covered user's age before giving the user access to any portion of the platform that uses a personalized algorithm. It requires the covered operator to use age verification that is commercially reasonable and technically feasible. If the covered user is a covered minor, then the operator must obtain verifiable consent from the minor's parent or legal guardian to use the personalized algorithm.

If a covered operator has used commercially reasonable and technically feasible methods to verify a user's age and is unable to determine if a user is a minor, the operator may presume the user is not a minor under the bill's provisions. But the operator must treat a user as a minor if it obtains actual knowledge that the user is a minor.

Data Retention

Unless any collected information is needed to comply with a federal or state law or regulation, the bill prohibits information collected for age-verification from being used for any other purpose and requires it to be deleted immediately after an attempt to verify the user's age. It similarly prohibits information collected for obtaining verifiable consent from a minor's parent or legal guardian from being used for any other purpose and requires it to be deleted immediately after an attempt to obtain the consent.

CONDITIONS WHEN AGE VERIFICATION IS NOT REQUIRED

Under the bill, age verification is not required if the personalized algorithm is:

1. based on information that is not persistently associated with the covered user or his or her device, and does not concern the user's previous interactions with media items generated or shared by other platform users;
2. based on (a) privacy or accessibility settings the covered user selects or (b) technical information concerning the covered user's device; or
3. needed to comply with another provision in the bill.

Additionally, age verification is not required if the media item based on a personalized algorithm is:

1. a direct and private communication;
2. solely in response to a specific search inquiry the covered user made; or
3. displayed solely because it immediately follows another item in a preexisting sequence and is from the same author, creator, poster, or source.

Personalized algorithms can also be used if a covered user expressly

and unambiguously requests that certain media he or she subscribes to be displayed, blocked, prioritized, or deprioritized. This includes any specific media items, including items the user subscribes to such as from an author, creator, or poster, or source to them, or those shared by users to pages or groups.

QUALITY REDUCTION OR PRICE INCREASE PROHIBITION

The bill prohibits covered operators from withholding, degrading, reducing the quality, or increasing the price of any product, service, or feature due to the bill's personalized algorithm restrictions, unless it is needed for the operator to comply with the bill's provisions.

CONTENT RESTRICTIONS

The bill specifies that it does not prohibit a covered operator from restricting access to, or the availability of, any media item that the operator in good faith considers to be obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing, or otherwise objectionable, regardless of whether the item is constitutionally protected.

DISCLOSURE WARNING

The bill generally requires covered operators to ensure that the platform displays a clear and conspicuous warning in black lettering against a white background enclosed by a black border. This requirement does not apply when the operator reasonably determines the covered user is not a covered minor.

The warning must read:

“The Surgeon General has warned that while social media may have benefits for some young users, social media is associated with significant mental health harms and has not been proven safe for young users.”

The bill requires operators to ensure that the required warning is displayed to a covered user (1) when he or she first accesses the platform each day and (2) immediately after the user has used the platform for three continuous or noncontinuous hours during the day, and

immediately after each hour of use during the day, regardless of whether it is continuous or not.

For the first time a user accesses the platform, the warning must occupy at least 75% of the screen or window and be shown continuously for at least 30 seconds without the option of dismissing or shortening the display period. The subsequent warnings must cover at least 25% of the screen or window and be displayed for at least 10 seconds, but the user may affirmatively dismiss the warning by clicking on a conspicuous “X” icon.

NOTIFICATIONS

The bill prohibits covered operators from sending any notification to a covered minor with any personalized algorithmic suggestion unless (1) it is sent between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time or (2) the operator has verifiable consent from the covered minor’s parent or legal guardian to send notifications outside this timeframe.

DEFAULT SETTINGS

The bill requires each covered operator to make the platform’s default setting, unless allowed by the covered minor’s parent or legal guardian (see below), one that:

1. prevents the minor from accessing or receiving any notification with any personalized algorithmic suggestion outside of the allowable time frame;
2. limits the minor’s access to any portion of the platform that uses a personalized algorithm to one hour per day;
3. sets the minor’s platform account to a mode that does not allow users other than users connected to the minor to (a) view or respond to content the minor posts or (b) chat or exchange messages with them; and
4. prevents the covered minor from accessing, viewing, or receiving sensitive content.

Under the bill, “sensitive content” is content the covered operator deems a violation of the community standards, or a similar guideline or standard the operator established for the platform.

The covered operator must also establish and maintain a mechanism that a minor’s verified parent or legal guardian can use for alternative settings to (1) set a different timeframe for accessing or receiving these notifications or using the platform and (2) enable the restricted mode described above.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

The bill requires each covered operator, starting by March 1, 2028, to annually disclose certain information for the previous calendar year in an attorney general-prescribed form and manner. This public disclosure includes the:

1. total number of platform users during the year;
2. portion of the total number of covered users (a) for whom the operator obtained verifiable consent from a parent or legal guardian, (b) that had the default settings enabled, and (c) that did not have the default settings enabled; and
3. the average amount of time per day that covered users used the platform, broken down by user age and hour of day.

APPLICABILITY

The bill specifies that it does not:

1. require a covered operator to give a covered minor’s parent or legal guardian access to, or control over, the minor’s platform account or any data associated with it, unless the access or control is specifically required by the bill, or
2. impose liability for any commercial activity or action by an operator subject to the federal Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) that is inconsistent with how COPPA treats commercial activity or action (15 U.S.C. § 6501).

BACKGROUND

CUTPA

By law, CUTPA prohibits businesses from engaging in unfair and deceptive acts or practices. It allows the Department of Consumer Protection commissioner, under specified procedures, to issue regulations defining an unfair trade practice, investigate complaints, issue cease and desist orders, order restitution in cases involving less than \$10,000, impose civil penalties of up to \$5,000, enter into consent agreements, ask the attorney general to seek injunctive relief, and accept voluntary statements of compliance. It also allows individuals to sue. Courts may issue restraining orders; award actual and punitive damages, costs, and reasonable attorney’s fees; and impose civil penalties of up to \$5,000 for willful violations and up to \$25,000 for a restraining order violation.

COMMITTEE ACTION

General Law Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/11/2026)