

STATE OF NEW YORK

8148--A

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

October 13, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. ROZIC, REYES, SHIMSKY, MAGNARELLI, HEVESI, BUTTENSCHON, FAHY, DICKENS, McMAHON, GLICK, DE LOS SANTOS, DURSO, McDONOUGH, GANDOLFO, SIMON, ZACCARO, DeSTEFANO, WALLACE, BERGER, BURDICK, SEAWRIGHT, McDONALD, BEEPHAN, SMULLEN, MANKTELOW, ARDILA, SLATER, SILLITTI, DARLING, K. BROWN, EPSTEIN, LEVENBERG, WEPRIN, BICHOTTE HERMELYN, LUPARDO, MIKULIN, PAULIN, SOLAGES, TAPIA, DAVILA, BURGOS, GUNTHER, TAYLOR, ZEBROWSKI, L. ROSENTHAL, JENSEN, KIM, J. A. GIGLIO, RIVERA, CUNNINGHAM, ZINERMAN, MAHER, WALKER, CONRAD, CLARK, JACKSON, DAIS, RAJKUMAR, FALL, LUNSFORD, FORREST, LEE, GIBBS, ANDERSON, LAVINE, STERN, GALLAGHER, DINOWITZ, BRAUNSTEIN, JEAN-PIERRE, SEPTIMO, KELLES, CARROLL, MAMDANI, HUNTER, BARRETT, BRONSON, PHEFFER AMATO, O'DONNELL, SANTABARBARA, COOK, BURKE, AUBRY, JONES, STIRPE, SAYEGH, RAGA, GALLAHAN, THIELE, ALVAREZ, SIMONE, EICHENSTEIN, CHANDLER-WATERMAN, PRETLOW, MORINELLO, SHRESTHA, EACHUS, MEEKS, JACOBSON, BRABENEC -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. GONZALEZ-ROJAS, WOERNER -- read once and referred to the Committee on Science and Technology -- recommitted to the Committee on Science and Technology in accordance with Assembly Rule 3, sec. 2 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the general business law, in relation to enacting the Stop Addictive Feeds Exploitation (SAFE) for Kids act prohibiting the provision of an addictive feed to a minor

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

- 1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Stop
- 2 Addictive Feeds Exploitation (SAFE) for Kids act".
- 3 § 2. Legislative intent. Social media platforms automatically process
- 4 enormous amounts of data about the behavior of users, using tens or
- 5 hundreds of thousands of data points for each user, filtered through
- 6 sophisticated machine learning algorithms, to create media feeds person-

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD11334-15-4

1 alized to each user. These feeds are based on data that generally
2 includes not only the deliberate choices of the users, such as content
3 they "like" or other users they "follow," but also conduct the user may
4 not even be aware of, such as how long they spent looking at a partic-
5 ular piece of media. These feeds make predictions about interests, mood,
6 and other factors related to what is most likely to keep users engaged
7 for as long as possible, creating a feed tailor-made to keep each user
8 on the platform for longer periods. Today these addictive feeds have
9 become the primary way that people experience social media.

10 Since their adoption, addictive feeds have had a dramatic negative
11 effect on children and teenagers, causing young users to spend more time
12 on social media than they otherwise would, which has been tied to
13 significantly higher rates of youth depression, anxiety, suicidal idea-
14 tion, and self-harm. Children are particularly susceptible to addictive
15 feeds because they provide a non-stop drip of dopamine with each new
16 piece of media and because children are less capable of exercising the
17 impulse control necessary to mitigate these negative effects. Research
18 shows that spending time on social media is ten times more dangerous
19 than other kinds of screentime. Among girls, the association between
20 poor mental health and social media use is stronger than the associ-
21 ations between poor mental health and binge drinking, obesity, or hard
22 drug use. Research also shows that social media usage at night is
23 particularly harmful to children's health. Self-regulation by social
24 media companies has not and will not work because the addictive feeds
25 are profitable, designed to make users stay on services so that children
26 can see more ads and the companies can collect more data.

27 This act, therefore, prohibits social media companies from providing
28 children under 18 with addictive feeds absent parental consent. This act
29 will still permit minors to view non-addictive feeds and any content
30 available on a social media platform, such as feeds listed in chronolog-
31 ical order, to ensure that children can still obtain all the core bene-
32 fits of social media, and does not limit social media companies' ability
33 to moderate in good faith to protect children from harmful or otherwise
34 objectionable content. Moreover, this act only imposes obligations on
35 social media companies where the addictive feed is a significant part of
36 their platform, and not on online services that provide such feeds as
37 ancillary features or add-ons, or where users are on the feed for a
38 relatively small portion of their time using the service.

39 To limit access to addictive feeds, this act will require social media
40 companies to use commercially reasonable methods to determine user age.
41 Regulations by the attorney general will provide guidance, but this
42 flexible standard will be based on the totality of the circumstances,
43 including the size, financial resources, and technical capabilities of a
44 given social media company, and the costs and effectiveness of available
45 age determination techniques for users of a given social media platform.
46 For example, if a social media company is technically and financially
47 capable of effectively determining the age of a user based on its exist-
48 ing data concerning that user, it may be commercially reasonable to
49 present that as an age determination option to users. Although the
50 legislature considered a statutory mandate for companies to respect
51 automated browser or device signals whereby users can inform a covered
52 operator that they are a covered minor, we determined that the attorney
53 general would already have discretion to promulgate such a mandate
54 through its rulemaking authority related to commercially reasonable and
55 technologically feasible age determination methods. The legislature
56 believes that such a mandate can be more effectively considered and

1 tailored through that rulemaking process. Existing New York antidiscrim-
2 ination laws and the attorney general's regulations will require,
3 regardless, that social media companies provide a range of age verifica-
4 tion methods all New Yorkers can use, and will not use age assurance
5 methods that rely solely on biometrics or require government identifica-
6 tion that many New Yorkers do not possess.

7 § 3. The general business law is amended by adding a new article 45 to
8 read as follows:

9 ARTICLE 45
10 SAFE FOR KIDS ACT

11 Section 1500. Definitions.

12 1501. Prohibition of addictive feeds.

13 1502. Overnight notifications.

14 1503. Parental control.

15 1504. Nondiscrimination.

16 1505. Rulemaking authority.

17 1506. Language access.

18 1507. Scope.

19 1508. Remedies.

20 § 1500. Definitions. For the purposes of this article, the following
21 terms shall have the following meanings:

22 1. "Addictive feed" shall mean a website, online service, online
23 application, or mobile application, or a portion thereof, in which
24 multiple pieces of media generated or shared by users of a website,
25 online service, online application, or mobile application, either
26 concurrently or sequentially, are recommended, selected, or prioritized
27 for display to a user based, in whole or in part, on information associ-
28 ated with the user or the user's device, unless any of the following
29 conditions are met, alone or in combination with one another:

30 (a) the recommendation, prioritization, or selection is based on
31 information that is not persistently associated with the user or user's
32 device, and does not concern the user's previous interactions with media
33 generated or shared by other users;

34 (b) the recommendation, prioritization, or selection is based on user-
35 selected privacy or accessibility settings, or technical information
36 concerning the user's device;

37 (c) the user expressly and unambiguously requested the specific media,
38 media by the author, creator, or poster of media the user has subscribed
39 to, or media shared by users to a page or group the user has subscribed
40 to, provided that the media is not recommended, selected, or prioritized
41 for display based, in whole or in part, on other information associated
42 with the user or the user's device that is not otherwise permissible
43 under this subdivision;

44 (d) the user expressly and unambiguously requested that specific
45 media, media by a specified author, creator, or poster of media the user
46 has subscribed to, or media shared by users to a page or group the user
47 has subscribed to pursuant to paragraph (c) of this subdivision, be
48 blocked, prioritized or deprioritized for display, provided that the
49 media is not recommended, selected, or prioritized for display based, in
50 whole or in part, on other information associated with the user or the
51 user's device that is not otherwise permissible under this subdivision;

52 (e) the media are direct and private communications;

53 (f) the media are recommended, selected, or prioritized only in
54 response to a specific search inquiry by the user;

1 (g) the media recommended, selected, or prioritized for display is
2 exclusively next in a pre-existing sequence from the same author, crea-
3 tor, poster, or source; or

4 (h) the recommendation, prioritization, or selection is necessary to
5 comply with the provisions of this article and any regulations promul-
6 gated pursuant to this article.

7 2. "Addictive social media platform" shall mean a website, online
8 service, online application, or mobile application, that offers or
9 provides users an addictive feed as a significant part of the services
10 provided by such website, online service, online application, or mobile
11 application.

12 3. "Covered minor" shall mean a user of a website, online service,
13 online application, or mobile application in New York when the operator
14 has actual knowledge the user is a minor.

15 4. "Covered user" shall mean a user of a website, online service,
16 online application, or mobile application in New York, not acting as an
17 operator, or agent or affiliate of the operator, of such website, online
18 service, online application, or mobile application, or any portion ther-
19 eof.

20 5. "Media" shall mean text, an image, or a video.

21 6. "Minor" shall mean an individual under the age of eighteen.

22 7. "Covered operator" shall mean any person, business, or other legal
23 entity, who operates or provides an addictive social media platform.

24 8. "Parent" shall mean parent or legal guardian.

25 § 1501. Prohibition of addictive feeds. 1. It shall be unlawful for a
26 covered operator to provide an addictive feed to a covered user unless:

27 (a) the covered operator has used commercially reasonable and techni-
28 cally feasible methods to determine that the covered user is not a
29 covered minor; or

30 (b) the covered operator has obtained verifiable parental consent to
31 provide an addictive feed to a covered minor.

32 2. (a) The attorney general shall promulgate regulations identifying
33 commercially reasonable and technically feasible methods for covered
34 operators to determine if a covered user is a covered minor required
35 pursuant to subdivision one of this section, and any exceptions thereto.

36 (b) In promulgating such regulations, the attorney general shall
37 consider the size, financial resources, and technical capabilities of
38 the addictive social media platform, the costs and effectiveness of
39 available age determination techniques for users of the addictive social
40 media platform, the audience of the addictive social media platform,
41 prevalent practices of the industry of the covered operator, and the
42 impact of the age determination techniques on the covered users' safety,
43 utility, and experience.

44 (c) Such regulations shall also identify the appropriate levels of
45 accuracy that would be commercially reasonable and technically feasible
46 for covered operators to achieve in determining whether a covered user
47 is a covered minor. Such regulations shall set forth multiple commer-
48 cially reasonable and technically feasible methods for a covered opera-
49 tor to determine if a covered user is a covered minor, including at
50 least one method that either does not rely solely on government issued
51 identification or that allows a covered user to maintain anonymity as to
52 the covered operator of the addictive social media platform.

53 (d) Where a covered operator has used commercially reasonable and
54 technically feasible age determination methods in compliance with such
55 regulations and has not determined that a covered user is a covered
56 minor, the covered operator shall operate under the presumption that the

1 covered user is not a covered minor for the purposes of this article,
2 unless it obtains actual knowledge that the covered user is a covered
3 minor.

4 3. Information collected for the purpose of determining a covered
5 user's age under paragraph (a) of subdivision one of this section shall
6 not be used for any purpose other than age determination and shall be
7 deleted immediately after an attempt to determine a covered user's age,
8 except where necessary for compliance with any applicable provisions of
9 New York state or federal law or regulation.

10 4. The attorney general shall promulgate regulations identifying meth-
11 ods of obtaining verifiable parental consent pursuant to paragraph (b)
12 of subdivision one of this section and section fifteen hundred two of
13 this article.

14 5. Information collected for the purpose of obtaining such verifiable
15 parental consent shall not be used for any purpose other than obtaining
16 verifiable parental consent and shall be deleted immediately after an
17 attempt to obtain verifiable parental consent, except where necessary
18 for compliance with any applicable provisions of New York state or
19 federal law or regulation.

20 6. Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring any opera-
21 tor to give a parent who grants verifiable parental consent any addi-
22 tional or special access to or control over the data or accounts of
23 their child.

24 7. Nothing in this section shall be construed as preventing any action
25 taken in good faith to restrict access to or availability of media that
26 the covered operator considers to be obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy,
27 excessively violent, harassing, or otherwise objectionable, whether or
28 not such material is constitutionally protected.

29 § 1502. Overnight notifications. It shall be unlawful for the covered
30 operator of an addictive social media platform to, between the hours of
31 12 AM Eastern and 6 AM Eastern, send notifications concerning an addic-
32 tive feed to a covered minor unless the operator has obtained verifiable
33 parental consent to send such nighttime notifications.

34 § 1503. Parental control. Nothing in this article shall be construed
35 as requiring the operator of an addictive social media platform to give
36 a parent any additional or special access to or control over the data or
37 accounts of their child.

38 § 1504. Nondiscrimination. A covered operator shall not withhold,
39 degrade, lower the quality, or increase the price of any product,
40 service, or feature, other than as necessary for compliance with the
41 provisions of this article or any rules or regulations promulgated
42 pursuant to this article, to a covered user due to the covered operator
43 not being permitted to provide an addictive feed to such covered user
44 under subdivision one of section fifteen hundred one of this article.

45 § 1505. Rulemaking authority. The attorney general shall promulgate
46 such rules and regulations as are necessary to effectuate and enforce
47 the provisions of this article.

48 § 1506. Language access. 1. Instructions to parents on how to provide
49 verifiable parental consent under paragraph (b) of subdivision one of
50 section fifteen hundred one of this article shall be made available in
51 no fewer than the twelve most commonly spoken languages in New York
52 state consistent with section two hundred two-a of the executive law and
53 as further defined by regulations promulgated by the attorney general.

54 2. The attorney general shall ensure that any public information or
55 guidance that it may provide concerning this chapter is available in the
56 twelve most commonly spoken languages in New York state consistent with

1 section two hundred two-a of the executive law and as further defined by
2 regulations promulgated by the attorney general.

3 § 1507. Scope. 1. This article shall apply to conduct that occurs in
4 whole or in part in New York. For purposes of this article, conduct
5 takes place wholly outside of New York if the addictive social media
6 platform is accessed by a user who is physically located outside of New
7 York.

8 2. Nothing in this article shall be construed to impose liability for
9 commercial activities or actions by operators subject to 15 U.S.C. §
10 6501 that is inconsistent with the treatment of such activities or
11 actions under 15 U.S.C. § 6502.

12 § 1508. Remedies. 1. No earlier than one hundred eighty days after
13 the effective date of this article, whenever it appears to the attorney
14 general, either upon complaint or otherwise, that any person, within or
15 outside the state, has engaged in or is about to engage in any of the
16 acts or practices stated to be unlawful in this article, the attorney
17 general may bring an action or special proceeding in the name and on
18 behalf of the people of the state of New York to enjoin any violation of
19 this article, to obtain restitution of any moneys or property obtained
20 directly or indirectly by any such violation, to obtain disgorgement of
21 any profits or gains obtained directly or indirectly by any such
22 violation, including but not limited to the destruction of unlawfully
23 obtained data, to obtain damages caused directly or indirectly by any
24 such violation, to obtain civil penalties of up to five thousand dollars
25 per violation, and to obtain any such other and further relief as the
26 court may deem proper, including preliminary relief.

27 2. The attorney general shall maintain a website to receive
28 complaints, information or referrals from members of the public concern-
29 ing a covered operator's or social media platform's alleged compliance
30 or non-compliance with the provisions of this article.

31 § 4. Severability. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision,
32 section or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of competent
33 jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair, or
34 invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation
35 to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part thereof
36 directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have
37 been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of the legislature
38 that this act would have been enacted even if such invalid provisions
39 had not been included herein.

40 § 5. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after
41 the office of the attorney general shall promulgate rules and regu-
42 lations necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act; provided
43 that the office of the attorney general shall notify the legislative
44 bill drafting commission upon the occurrence of the enactment of the
45 rules and regulations necessary to effectuate and enforce the
46 provisions of section three of this act in order that the commission may
47 maintain an accurate and timely effective data base of the official text
48 of the laws of the state of New York in furtherance of effectuating the
49 provisions of section 44 of the legislative law and section 70-b of the
50 public officers law. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment
51 and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation
52 of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and
53 completed on or before such effective date.