

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 10, 2025

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 3, 2025

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 1, 2025

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 21, 2025

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY FEBRUARY 25, 2025

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2025–26 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 56

**Introduced by Assembly Members Bauer-Kahan and Wicks
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Kalra, Lowenthal, Ortega, and
Papan)**

(Coauthor: Senator Weber Pierson)

December 2, 2024

An act to add Chapter 25 (commencing with Section 28000) to Division 20 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to social media platforms.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 56, as amended, Bauer-Kahan. Social media: warning labels.

Existing law generally regulates social media platforms, including, among other laws, the Protecting Our Kids from Social Media Addiction Act that prohibits an operator of an addictive internet-based service or application, including a social media platform, from providing an addictive feed, as defined, to a minor user, except as prescribed.

This bill would enact the Social Media Warning Law that would require a covered platform, as defined, to display a certain black box warning to a user each day the user initially accesses the social media

platform, again after 3 hours of cumulative active use, and thereafter at least once per hour of cumulative active use, as prescribed. The bill would authorize the Director of the State Department of Public Health to adopt regulations to modify that black box warning, as specified.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (a) Social media provides an important tool for communication
4 and information sharing. Approximately 95 percent of minor
5 teenagers say that they use at least one social media platform, and
6 more than one-third report using social media almost constantly.

7 (b) As the United States Surgeon General has reported, recent
8 evidence has identified “reasons for concern” about social media
9 usage by children and adolescents. This evidence includes a study
10 concluding that the risk of poor mental health outcomes doubles
11 for children and adolescents who use social media at least three
12 hours per day and research finding that social media usage is linked
13 to a variety of negative health outcomes, including low self-esteem
14 and disordered eating for adolescent girls.

15 (c) Further, per the Surgeon General’s Social Media and Youth
16 Mental Health advisory, “Excessive and problematic use of social
17 media can harm children and adolescents by disrupting important
18 healthy behaviors. Social media platforms are often designed to
19 maximize user engagement, which has the potential to encourage
20 excessive use and behavioral dysregulation. Push notifications,
21 autoplay, infinite scroll, quantifying and displaying popularity
22 (i.e., ‘likes’), and algorithms that leverage user data to serve content
23 recommendations are some examples of these features that
24 maximize engagement.”

25 (d) Heavier usage of social media also leads to less healthy sleep
26 patterns and sleep quality, which can in turn exacerbate both
27 physical and mental health problems.

28 (e) Evidence cited in lawsuits against social media companies
29 for the harms caused against children supports the use of warning
30 labels to advise users of the potential harms of these features.
31 Lawsuits have cited internal documents from companies detailing

1 their deliberate targeting of children in order to bring them on the
2 social media platform and to keep them on the platform. Internal
3 documents have also revealed that social media platforms are aware
4 that their features can impact the health and development of
5 children’s brains and mental health. They understand that children
6 cannot resist some of these features using their underdeveloped
7 discipline and capitalize on this in order to keep them on their
8 platforms.

9 (f) Both California and the United States as a whole are facing
10 an ongoing youth mental health crisis, with rates of adolescent
11 suicides, depressive episodes, and feelings of sadness and
12 hopelessness on the rise in recent years.

13 (g) Governments across the globe have effectively employed
14 black box style warnings to educate the public regarding goods
15 that pose a risk of harm to public health.

16 (h) For these reasons, it is essential that California act to ensure
17 that users, their families, and the public are warned of the risks of
18 social media use, and requiring the display of a black box style
19 warning is an appropriate mechanism for doing so.

20 SEC. 2. Chapter 25 (commencing with Section 28000) is added
21 to Division 20 of the Health and Safety Code, to read:

22
23 CHAPTER 25. SOCIAL MEDIA WARNING LAW
24

25 28000. This chapter shall be ~~known, and may be cited,~~ *known*
26 as the Social Media Warning Law.

27 28001. (a) For purposes of this chapter, “covered platform”
28 has the same meaning as addictive internet-based service or
29 application, as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of
30 Section 27000.5.

31 (b) “Covered platform” does not mean an internet website,
32 online service, online application, or mobile application whose
33 primary function is any of the following:

- 34 (1) The sale of goods or services.
35 (2) Cloud storage.
36 (3) Electronic mail.
37 (4) Direct messaging, in which communications are viewable
38 only by the sender and an intended recipient, that does not allow
39 public content dissemination, interaction, or access.
40 (5) Communication internal to an organization.

(6) Internal organizational collaboration services that are not offered to the general public or consumers outside the organization.

28002. (a) (1) (A) For each calendar day in which a user uses a covered platform, the covered platform shall display, pursuant to subparagraph (B), the black box warning described in subdivision (b) to the user when the user initially accesses the covered platform.

(B) The black box warning required by this paragraph shall be displayed clearly and continuously for a duration of at least 10 seconds, unless the user affirmatively dismisses the warning by clicking on a conspicuous “X” icon. That black box warning shall be displayed in a manner that occupies at least 25 percent of the screen or window that the user is using to access the covered platform.

(2) (A) For each calendar day in which a user uses a covered platform, the covered platform shall display, pursuant to subparagraph (B), the black box warning described in subdivision (b) after three hours of cumulative active use and thereafter at least once per hour of cumulative active use.

(B) (i) Except as provided in clause (ii), the black box warning required by subparagraph (A) shall be displayed clearly and continuously for a duration of at least 90 seconds, without providing the ability to bypass or click through the warning, in a manner that occupies at between 75 percent and 100 percent of the screen or window that the user is using to access the covered platform.

(ii) If the covered platform has actual knowledge that a user is over 17 years of age, the black box warning displayed to the user pursuant to subparagraph (A) may be displayed in the manner described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1).

(b) (1) The black box warning consists of the following text displayed clearly, conspicuously, and legibly in black text on a white background:

“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.”

1 (2) The Director of the State Department of Public Health may
2 adopt regulations to modify the warning described in paragraph
3 (1) in furtherance of the purposes of this chapter.

4 (c) The provision of the notice required by this section or a user
5 affirmatively dismissing the notice do not waive, release, otherwise
6 limit, or serve as a defense to, any claim, including claims premised
7 on failure to warn, other than a claim premised on a violation of
8 this section.

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