

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)**

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 ~~social media platform~~ *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
32 their deliberate targeting of children in order to bring them on the
33 social media platform and to keep them on the platform. Internal

documents have also revealed that social media platforms are aware that their features can impact the health and development of children's brains and mental health. They understand that children cannot resist some of these features using their underdeveloped discipline and capitalize on this in order to keep them on their platforms.

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 25. SOCIAL MEDIA WARNING LAW

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

28001. (a) For purposes of this chapter, ~~“social media “covered platform” means an internet website or internet medium that meets all of the following criteria:~~ *has the same meaning as addictive internet-based service or application, as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 27000.5.*

~~(a) The internet website or internet medium permits a person to become a registered user, establish an account, or create a profile for the purpose of allowing the user to create, share, and view user-generated content through that account or profile.~~

~~(b) The internet website or internet medium enables one or more users to generate content that can be viewed by other users of the internet website or internet medium.~~

~~(c) The internet website or internet medium primarily serves as a medium for users to interact with content generated by other users of the internet website or internet medium.~~

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

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

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

13 28002. (a) (1) (A) For each calendar day in which a user uses
14 a ~~social media~~ covered platform, the ~~social media~~ covered platform
15 shall display, pursuant to subparagraph (B), the black box warning
16 described in subdivision (b) to the user when the user initially
17 accesses the ~~social media~~ covered platform.

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

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

30 (B) ~~The~~ (i) Except as provided in clause (ii), the black box
31 warning required by ~~this paragraph~~ subparagraph (A) shall be
32 displayed clearly and continuously for a duration of at least 90
33 seconds, without providing the ability to bypass or click through
34 the warning, in a manner that occupies at between 75 percent and
35 100 percent of the screen or window that the user is using to access
36 the ~~social media~~ covered platform.

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

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

4
5 “The Surgeon General has warned that while social media may
6 have benefits for some young users, social media is associated
7 with significant mental health harms and has not been proven safe
8 for young users.”
9

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

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