

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

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 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~~ “*Excessive* and problematic
17 use of social media can harm children and adolescents by disrupting
18 important healthy behaviors. Social media platforms are often
19 designed to maximize user engagement, which has the potential
20 to encourage excessive use and behavioral dysregulation. Push
21 notifications, autoplay, infinite scroll, quantifying and displaying
22 popularity (i.e., ‘likes’), and algorithms that leverage user data to
23 serve content recommendations are some examples of these
24 features that 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
34 documents have also revealed that social media platforms are aware
35 that their features can impact the health and development of

1 children’s brains and mental health. They understand that children
2 cannot resist some of these features using their underdeveloped
3 discipline and capitalize on this in order to keep them on their
4 platforms.

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

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

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

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

18
19 CHAPTER 25. SOCIAL MEDIA WARNING LAW
20

21 28000. This chapter shall be known, and may be cited, as the
22 Social Media Warning Law.

23 28001. For purposes of this chapter, “social media platform”
24 means an internet website or internet medium that meets all of the
25 following criteria:

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

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

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

36 28002. (a) (1) (A) For each calendar day in which a user uses
37 a social media platform, the social media platform shall display,
38 pursuant to subparagraph (B), the black box warning described in
39 subdivision (b) to the user when the user initially accesses the
40 social media platform.

1 (B) The black box warning required by this paragraph shall be
2 displayed clearly and continuously for a duration of at least 10
3 seconds, unless the user ~~clicks through the black box warning~~
4 ~~before 10 seconds have passed~~, *affirmatively dismisses the warning*
5 *by clicking on a conspicuous “X” icon. That black box warning*
6 *shall be displayed* in a manner that occupies at least 25 percent of
7 the screen or window that the user is using to access the social
8 media platform.

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

14 (B) The black box warning required by this paragraph shall be
15 displayed clearly and continuously for a duration of at least 90
16 seconds, without providing the ability to bypass or click through
17 the warning, in a manner that occupies at between 75 percent and
18 100 percent of the screen or window that the user is using to access
19 the social media ~~platform~~ *platform*.

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

23
24 “The Surgeon General has warned that while social media may
25 have benefits for some young users, social media is associated
26 with significant mental health harms and has not been proven safe
27 for young users.”

28
29 (2) The Director of the State Department of Public Health may
30 adopt regulations to modify the warning described in paragraph
31 (1) in furtherance of the purposes of this chapter.

32 (c) The provision of the notice required by this section ~~does or~~
33 ~~a user affirmatively dismissing the notice do~~ not waive, release,
34 otherwise limit, or serve as a defense to, any claim, including
35 claims premised on failure to warn, other than a claim premised
36 on a violation of this section.

1		_____
2	REVISIONS:	
3	Heading—Lines 1 and 2.	
4		_____

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