



ATTORNEY GENERAL WILLIAM TONG
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

**Testimony in Support of H.B. No. 5037,
An Act Promoting the Safety of Minors on Social Media Platforms**
General Law Committee
Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.B. No 5037, which aims to protect our kids from addictive algorithms created by social media companies. This bill is largely the same as last year's H.B. No. 6857, which passed the House with strong bipartisan support. I thank Governor Lamont for his partnership on this important issue this year.

Young people spend hours each day glued to social media, with dire consequences for their learning, relationships, and mental health. These platforms are addictive by design, with constant, attention-grabbing alerts and algorithms designed to override self-control, to maximize the platform's profit at the expense of children's and teens' well-being. We must prioritize the health and development of our youth by enabling parental supervision, rather than setting young people up to fall victim to addictive and destructive social media algorithms. Families can't afford to wait for the federal government or the tech giants to implement reasonable safety reforms.

In fact, we cannot trust big tech to do it themselves. Over the last several years, I have pursued an investigation into TikTok and sued Meta. My lawsuit against Meta alleges that it engages in self-serving, harmful features and practices that intentionally get kids hooked and exacerbate the youth mental health crisis. At the same time, Meta falsely assured the public that these algorithms are safe and suitable for young users even though the U.S. Surgeon General has said these addictive features have fueled a "youth mental health crisis".

This bill would require social media platforms to verify whether a user is a minor through reasonable methods and get parental consent to expose their children to these addictive algorithms. Importantly, personal data collected for age verification or parental consent must be deleted and cannot be used for any other purpose. The bill also targets other facets of social media that can have a negative impact on individuals. It would set default limitations on how long a child can use the algorithm, what hours in the day they can receive notifications, and who can view a child's account as well as send them direct messages. Parents would be able override these defaults if they so wish.

A provision added to this year's bill would require that social media platforms display a prominent warning advising that the Surgeon General has cautioned that social media is associated with significant mental health harms and has not been proven safe for young users. Platforms must display this warning upon a minor's first use of the platform on a given day, and again upon prolonged time spent on the platform over the course of the day.

The bill would also require social media companies to annually report to the state the number of minors on their platform, the number of minors with parental consent to use addictive algorithms, and the average amount of time per day a minor spends on the platform, broken down by both age and time of day. These annual reports are critical to push social media companies to be more transparent about kids' social media use going forward.



ATTORNEY GENERAL WILLIAM TONG
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Opponents of similar laws in other states claim it disproportionately impacts LGBTQ+ and other marginalized youth by limiting exposure of content from their communities. However, this bill doesn't prevent anyone from finding and following users in their respective community. This bill simply restricts tech giants from using manipulative algorithms that result in children "doom scrolling" for hours every single day.

While Big Tech has challenged some state laws aimed at protecting kids, we are confident that our legislation is constitutional. Similar protections aimed at protecting minors from addictive algorithms have been passed in California and New York. Big Tech's challenge to California's protections failed in both federal district court and before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. New York's law has not been challenged.

In addition, social media platforms have already implemented a number of methods for verifying age and identity. This proposal does not prescribe that social media platforms use any particular method or that they collect and store this information. To the contrary, the bill requires that platforms delete information collected for age verification and bars them from using it for other purposes.

We cannot continue to allow our kids to be taken advantage of by companies whose main purpose is turning a profit. It is incumbent on us to ensure that we protect them so that they can be healthy and the best versions of themselves.

For the reasons above, the Office of the Attorney General recommends that the Committee favorably report H.B. No. 5037.

For additional information, please contact Nate Kalechman, Director of Legislative Affairs for the Office of the Attorney General at Nathan.Kalechman@ct.gov.