

We would like to use cookies

We use cookies on our website. They help us get to know you a little and how you use our website. This helps us provide a more valuable and tailored experience for you and others.

No, do not use cookies

Yes, you can use cookies

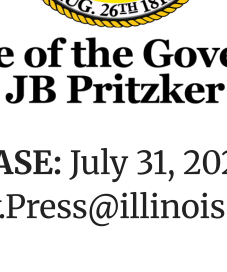
You can revoke cookies at anytime at the bottom of the page.

Press Releases

Gov. Pritzker Signs Nation-Leading Legislation to Protect Illinois Children on Social Media

HB5511 restricts the use of addictive algorithmic features on children and strengthens safety protections

JULY 31, 2026



Office of the Governor
JB Pritzker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 31, 2026
Gov.Press@illinois.gov

CONTACT:

CHICAGO – Today, Governor JB Pritzker signed the Children’s Social Media Safety Act (HB5511), a sweeping set of protections designed to keep Illinois kids safe online. The bill establishes comprehensive safeguards for children against the most addictive social media platform features and strengthens protections for minors. The bill was passed with unanimous support in both chambers, reflecting the broad, bipartisan concern about tech companies profiting off the attention and mental health of Illinois children.

“Big social media companies understand and have confessed to how their platforms and addictive algorithms harm our children – anxiety, safety risks, financial scam and manipulation – but refuse to take meaningful action on their own,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “I’m proud that Illinois is stepping up where big tech has abandoned their responsibility with the Children’s Online Social Media Safety Act – another nation-leading action to protect our kids.”

“Protecting children means meeting today’s challenges with today’s solutions,” **said Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton**. “We’re strengthening safeguards on social media and putting the well-being of young people ahead of corporate profits to help create a safer online environment for our kids and teens.”

“While social media networks play a significant role in the lives of our youth, it’s important that we balance that with guardrails designed to keep children safe – guardrails that technology companies should have implemented from the beginning,” **said Attorney General Kwame Raoul**. “As my office continues our litigation and investigation of the practices of some social media networks, we applaud the efforts of Governor Pritzker and the legislative sponsors for putting in place protections that will make the social media marketplace as a whole safer for our children.”

Under the law, social media platforms in use in Illinois are required to strengthen their default privacy settings for users under 18 and limit the use of algorithms designed to keep young people scrolling. Instead, these users will only be shown content they request or search for or that is posted by a creator or friend they follow. The law does not create any content restrictions for children and instead targets addictive and harmful design features. This means that children can still access information and community online but aren’t subjected to the most harmful and addictive features of social media platforms.

Parents will set their child’s age during device set up, which then automatically adjusts design features in apps like algorithmic feeds, profile visibility, and how adult strangers can interact with them. The law also includes provisions to shield the precise location of minors and provides for further limits digital currency transactions.

The Illinois Attorney General is given authority to enforce the law with civil penalties up to \$50,000 for each violation.

Key Features of the Law:

- **Implementation Logistics:** The law requires an age verification process on devices to protects kids’ data and avoid the need for apps to ask for IDs or facial recognition to confirm a child’s age. Companies already have this technology available, and the State has set an implementation timeline of 2028.
- **Platforms Covered:** The law includes social media platforms known to have addictive algorithms (e.g. Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, X) as well as platforms where children can communicate with strangers, like online gaming platforms (e.g. Roblox). The law explicitly notes that news media, broadband service providers, email providers, and learning management systems are not covered platforms and are not subject to this law.
- **Protecting Children from Strangers Online:** The default features limit children’s exposure to adult strangers. Children’s profiles will not be visible or searchable by adult strangers and will not appear on their “for you” pages. Children will not receive messages, share locations, or engage in financial transactions through social media with adult strangers. Children can still socialize and have full social media functionality with trusted adults and family members by following/friending.
- **Limiting Nighttime Notifications:** Ensures that any social media notifications designed to bring children back to the algorithm at all hours of the night are disabled between 10 p.m.-7 a.m., while still allowing notifications for messages to communicate with their friends and loved ones.
- **Empowering Parents:** The protections will be default on kids’ devices, but parents can choose to override the default settings or other design features, tailoring the online experience for their family.
- **What it Looks Like:** Children can still access their favorite apps. But instead of being fed targeted, addictive content, their main feed of photos and/or videos would only people that they follow, in chronological order. They also would not receive notifications spawned by the addictive feed from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. Their profiles would not be accessible to adult strangers.

Taking Action While Social Media Companies Abdicate Their Responsibility

Governor Pritzker’s efforts come in response to growing concerns from parents and educators about the addictive nature of social media and mounting evidence of negative mental health, safety, and financial impacts on young people.

Studies have found that kids who spend more than 3 hours per day on social media face double the risk of poor mental health outcomes, including symptoms of depression and anxiety. Analysis done by the Cybersafety Research Center also found that **more than half** of safety tools and protections touted by major social media companies fail to work as advertised. A 2023 **report** found that users under 20 lost as much as \$312 million that year to financial scams and manipulation.

Many of these social media companies have admitted to the adverse impacts of their platform in internal investigations, public testimony, or litigation. An internal investigation done by Meta found their platform negatively impacted body image, anxiety, and depression for a significant portion of teenage users. During testimony in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee, executives of Meta, TikTok, Snap, and X acknowledged that children using their platforms face risks of cyberbullying, sexual exploitation, exposure to harmful content, and excessive use. While they are willing to admit those risks when compelled, they continue to deploy a business model that depends on exposing children to those risks while dodging accountability and abdicating responsibility.

Earlier this week, the Governor **signed legislation** requiring school districts to adopt bell-to-bell policies that restrict access to cell phones, creating distraction-free classrooms, encouraging students to connect more deeply with curriculum and each other, and allowing educators to focus on teaching.

“For far too long we’ve let Big Tech go unchecked, and our children have been paying the price,” **said State Rep. Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz (D-Glenview)**. “This legislation tells social media platforms to help fix an epidemic that they caused by designing addictive algorithms and putting revenue over the mental health and wellbeing of our kids.”

“Parents deserve confidence that the apps and platforms their children use are built with safety, not exploitation in mind,” **said State Senator Willie Preston (D-Chicago)**. “We have to set clear expectations for tech companies and ensure they are prioritizing the health, privacy and well-being of young people over their bottom line.”

“The Children’s Online Social Media Safety Act marks a critical step to protect Illinois kids from addictive algorithms and harmful content,” **said Julie Scelfo, Founder and Executive Director of Mothers Against Media Addiction (MAMA)**. “By requiring these apps to implement default settings for minors, such as prohibiting addictive feeds, banning notifications between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., and shielding their physical locations, this legislation will help limit the time Illinois children spend on their phones and help protect them from social media’s worst harms. Perhaps most importantly, the new law ensures that Big Tech companies will be held legally and financially accountable if they fail to comply with these basic, but essential safeguards.”

“Common Sense Media commends Governor Pritzker and Illinois lawmakers for establishing this important new law to protect kids online. The Children’s Social Media Safety Act is intended to hold tech companies accountable for some of the most pressing challenges facing young people in the digital world, including by limiting addictive design features, implementing age assurance that works, and requiring safety by default for minors,” **said Founder and CEO of Common Sense Media James P. Steyer**. “Parents in Illinois and across the country have been demanding this kind of accountability for years. Momentum is clearly growing in states across the country and around the world to better protect kids from the risks we know are associated with addictive social media and with AI chatbots. We urge all states to follow Illinois’ example by passing strong protections for kids and teens online.”

###



Contact us

IL State Police

✉ ISP.PIO.Personnel@illinois.gov

IL Department of Transportation

 dot.ooc@illinois.gov

 illinois-department-of-transportation.prezly.com

IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

 DCEO.Media@illinois.gov

 illinois-department-of-commerce-and-economic-opportunity.prezly.com

IL Department of Human Services

 DHS.Press@illinois.gov

 idhs.prezly.com

IL Department of Information Technology

 DoIT.PIO@illinois.gov

IL Central Management Services

 cms.iisnews@illinois.gov

 illinois-department-of-central-management-services.prezly.com

IL Office of the Governor

 gov.press@illinois.gov

 gov-pritzker-newsroom.prezly.com

Get updates in your mailbox

Your email address

Subscribe

By clicking "Subscribe" I confirm I have read and agree to the [Privacy Policy](#).

About The State of Illinois Newsroom

To stay updated on Governor Pritzker's most recent press conferences, please visit the Governor's Twitter page @GovPritzker or the Governor's Facebook page @GovPritzker for the latest livestreams. Downloadable video footage of press conferences can also be accessed at the following link: <https://cms.illinois.gov/agency/media/video/videos.html>

Contact

gov.press@illinois.gov

gov.illinois.gov

[Privacy requests](#) [Start using cookies](#)