



April 29, 2026

Missouri Senate General Laws Committee
201 W Capitol Ave
Jefferson City MO 65101

Re: HB 1887 - Creates the offense of and civil penalties for disclosure of intimate digital depictions (Oppose)

Dear President O’Laughlin and Chair Trent,

On behalf of the Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA), we write to respectfully oppose the social media provisions contained in HB 1887, the “Megan Meier Act.” CCIA represents a broad cross-section of communications and technology companies that provide services used by millions of Americans. While we share the Legislature’s commitment to promoting youth safety online, the current bill raises significant constitutional, operational, and policy concerns. We urge the Senate to refrain from advancing HB 1887 in its current form.

The bill bars access to constitutionally protected speech.

The bill effectively prohibits individuals under sixteen from accessing social media services, requiring covered services to immediately terminate accounts of all users under sixteen. While Section 407.3475(3) appears to contemplate the possibility of accounts jointly managed by a parent or guardian, the bill provides no definition, framework, or mechanism for such accounts, nor does it require digital services to offer them. As a practical matter, this provision operates as a near-total ban on minors’ access to social media. Such a restriction limits minors’ ability to access lawful speech and information, and removes the ability of parents to make individualized decisions for their children, raising serious free speech concerns.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled that the First Amendment applies to teens as well as adults, holding that “[M]inors are entitled to a significant measure of First Amendment protection, and only in relatively narrow and well-defined circumstances may government bar public dissemination of protected materials to them.”¹ The Court has further held that “to foreclose access to social media altogether is to prevent the user from engaging in the legitimate exercise of First Amendment rights.”² Yet HB 1887 effectively does just this, foreclosing a wide range of protected speech for a population clearly entitled to access it. Nor do states have the authority to require parental consent for viewing such content; the Court has likewise rejected the argument that “the state has the power to prevent children from hearing or saying anything without their parents’ prior consent.”³

For these reasons, most lower courts that have ruled on the issue have held that the First Amendment does not permit states to require age verification to access protected speech.⁴ For

¹ See, e.g., *Erznoznik*, 422 U.S. at 212-13; *Brown v. Ent. Merchs. Ass’n*, 564 U.S. 786, 794 (2011).

² *Packingham v. North Carolina*, 582 U.S. 98, 108 (2017).

³ *Brown*, 564 U.S. at 795 n. 3 (2011).

⁴ See, e.g., *NetChoice v. Jones*, No. 1:25-cv-02067, 2026 WL 561099 (E.D. Va. Feb. 27, 2026); *CCIA v. Paxton*, No. 25-cv-01660, 2025 WL 3754045 (W.D. Tex. Dec. 23, 2025); *SEAT v. Paxton*, No. 25-cv-01662, 2025 WL 3731733 (W.D. Tex. Dec. 23, 2025); *NetChoice v. Murrill*, No. 25-231, 2025 WL 3634112 (M.D. La. Dec. 15, 2025); *NetChoice*

example, a Louisiana federal court recently struck down a similar age verification mandate, noting that “The Act’s age-verification and parental-consent requirements fail strict and intermediate scrutiny. Even if the Court accepts that Defendants have a compelling interest ‘in protecting the physical and psychological well-being of minors,’ Defendants have not established a causal relationship between social media use and health harms to minors.”⁵

The bill’s requirements undermine privacy.

While well-meaning, age verification mandates inherently require collecting sensitive data about users and adults. Such policies run contrary to the data minimization principles underlying federal and international best practices for privacy protection.⁶ Requiring individuals to share sensitive personal information with third parties, including IDs or biometrics, can make recipients a prime target for identity theft, cyberattacks, or other data breaches.⁷ Such dangers are far from hypothetical: several of the most devastating data breaches in recent years are directly attributable to age verification requirements.⁸ Government officials could also access this sensitive data through enforcement inquiries.

The Commission Nationale de l’Informatique et des Libertés (CNIL) analyzed several existing online age verification solutions but found that none of these options could satisfactorily meet three key standards: 1) providing sufficiently reliable verification; 2) allowing for complete coverage of the population; and 3) respecting the protection of individuals’ data, privacy, and security.⁹ For these reasons, a group of 438 privacy and data security scientists has recently urged policymakers to institute a moratorium on age verification requirements until better solutions emerge.¹⁰ Though the intention to keep kids safe online is commendable, this bill undermines that initiative by requiring more data collection about young people.

The proposed bill further undermines privacy by requiring covered services to “Access and review account activity” and “Request deletion of the minor’s account.” These provisions effectively remove all autonomy for younger internet users to speak with their friends, read, or research new information. Such excessive monitoring has been shown to negatively affect

v. Carr, 789 F. Supp. 3d 1200 (N.D. Ga. 2025); *NetChoice v. Yost*, 778 F. Supp. 3d 923 (S.D. Ohio 2025); *Griffin*, 2025 WL 978607; *SEAT v. Paxton*, 765 F. Supp. 3d 575 (W.D. Tex. 2025); *NetChoice v. Reyes*, 748 F. Supp. 3d 1105 (D. Utah 2024); *CCIA v. Paxton*, 747 F. Supp. 3d 1011 (W.D. Tex. 2024).

⁵ *Murrill*, 2025 WL 3634112 at *72.

⁶ See, e.g., *Fair Information Practice Principles (FIPPs)*, Fed. Privacy Council, <https://www.fpc.gov/resources/fipps/>; *Principle (c): Data Minimisation*, U.K. Info. Comm’r Off., <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-protection-principles/a-guide-to-the-data-protection-principles/data-minimisation/>.

⁷ Shoshana Weissmann, *Age-Verification Legislation Discourages Data Minimization, Even When Legislators Don’t Intend That*, R St. Inst. (May 24, 2023), <https://www.rstreet.org/commentary/age-verification-legislation-discourages-data-minimization-even-when-legislators-dont-intend-that/>.

⁸ Mark Tsagas, *Online Age Checking Is Creating a Treasure Trove of Data for Hackers*, *The Conversation* (Nov. 11, 2025), <https://theconversation.com/online-age-checking-is-creating-a-treasure-trove-of-data-for-hackers-268586>.

⁹ *Online Age Verification: Balancing Privacy and the Protection of Minors*, CNIL (Sept. 22, 2022), <https://www.cnil.fr/en/online-age-verification-balancing-privacy-and-protection-minors>.

¹⁰ Joint Statement of Security and Privacy Scientists and researchers on Age Assurance (Mar. 9, 2026), <https://csa-scientist-open-letter.org/ageverif-Feb2026>.

young people’s mental health and development.¹¹ This provision is therefore at odds with the bill’s stated goal: to “protect user privacy” online. As an Arkansas federal court recently noted, this provision requires online services “to compile scores of data about minor visitors to their websites, somehow identify each minor’s parents to provide dashboard access to them, and follow minors across devices to enforce parental restrictions”, a burden on freedom of expression it deemed unconstitutional.¹²

The bill’s age verification requirement undermines competition.

Collecting sensitive data from users, proactively screening it, and properly securing it is a cost-intensive barrier to entry for smaller businesses.¹³ ID requirements also deter customers and can cut businesses’ conversion rates by half.¹⁴ Furthermore, as noted above, age verification provides targets for hackers. Startups are especially financially vulnerable to data breaches, which in 2025 cost companies an average of \$160 per record, or \$4.44 million per breach, enough to bankrupt many small companies.¹⁵ Consequently, over 60 percent of startups close after being hacked.¹⁶ For these reasons, a recent Digital Trust & Safety Partnership (DTSP) report, *Age Assurance: Guiding Principles and Best Practices*, found that “smaller companies may not be able to sustain their business” if forced to verify user ages.¹⁷

As used in the bill, the term “addictive” is unconstitutionally vague and lacks adequate scientific foundation.

HB 1887 prohibits covered services from employing “addictive” design features. While the bill lists two examples of prohibited features, it does not define the term “addictive.” As the above Arkansas federal court held, such terminology “fails to specify a standard of conduct to which platforms must conform[,] and its violation entirely depends upon the sensitivities of some unspecified user,” and is therefore unconstitutionally vague.¹⁸

Moreover, this label lacks scientific foundation. Humans engage in various compulsive and repetitive behaviors — some of which may negatively impact physical and/or mental health. Compulsive behaviors could range from binge eating unhealthy foods to exercising excessively

¹¹ See, e.g., Hannah Quay-de la Valle, *The Chilling Effect of Student Monitoring: Disproportionate Impacts and Mental Health Risks*, Ctr. for Democracy & Tech. (May 5, 2022), <https://cdt.org/insights/the-chilling-effect-of-student-monitoring-disproportionate-impacts-and-mental-health-risks/> (finding that “Monitoring programs, if not carefully implemented, can stifle growth and leave students vulnerable to the chilling effect, placing their mental health at risk”).

¹² *NetChoice v. Griffin*, No. 5:25-CV-5140 at *22-23 (W.D. Ark. Apr. 20, 2026) (cleaned up).

¹³ See, e.g., Jesse Lieberfeld, *Knowledge Standards in Online Safety and Privacy Legislation*, CCIA (Apr. 14, 2026), <https://ccianet.org/articles/knowledge-standards-in-online-safety-and-privacy-legislation/>.

¹⁴ *More Than Just a Number: How Determining User Age Impacts Startups*, Engine, 6 (Aug. 2024), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/571681753c44d835a440c8b5/t/66ad1ff867b7114cc6f16b00/1722621944736/More+Than+Just+A+Number+-+Updated+August+2024.pdf>.

¹⁵ *Cost of a Data Breach Report*, IBM (2025), <https://www.ibm.com/reports/data-breach>.

¹⁶ Robert Johnson III, *60 Percent Of Small Companies Close Within 6 Months Of Being Hacked*, Cybercrime (Jan. 19, 2023),

<https://cybersecurityventures.com/60-percent-of-small-companies-close-within-6-months-of-being-hacked/>.

¹⁷ *Age Assurance: Guiding Principles and Best Practices*, Dig. Tr. & Safety P’ship, 10 (Sept. 2023), https://dtspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/DTSP_Age-Assurance-Best-Practices.pdf.

¹⁸ *NetChoice v. Griffin*, No. 5:25-CV-5140 at *13 (W.D. Ark. Apr. 20, 2026).



to watching favorite shows for hours on end. However, certain regular activities do not necessarily amount to “addictions”. The most recent edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Fifth Edition Text Revision (DSM-5-TR)* declined to include definitions for “Internet gaming disorder,” “Internet addiction,” “excessive use of the Internet,” or “excessive use of social media,” noting that “[g]ambling disorder is currently the only non-substance-related disorder included in the *DSM-5-TR* chapter ‘Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders.’”¹⁹

The connected nature of social media has led to allegations that online services are negatively impacting teenagers’ mental health. Researchers argue that existing evidence does not adequately support this theory and often mirrors the “moral panic” associated with new technologies. Studies from leading universities indicate that depression has virtually no causal relation to social media use.²⁰ Even the often-cited U.S. Surgeon General Advisory *Social Media and Youth Mental Health* discusses both potential risks and benefits of social media use among children and adolescents. It concludes, for example, that social media connects young people with communities who share their identities, abilities, and interests.²¹ It can also provide access to important information and create spaces for self-expression. Social media can especially benefit marginalized youth, including racial, ethnic, sexual, and gender minorities, as online peer support can mitigate the stresses they face.²² In short, as an Ohio court noted when striking down a similar law last year, “nearly all of the research showing any harmful effects” for minors on social media “is based on correlation, not evidence of causation.”²³

Absent any medical consensus on the topic, businesses cannot be expected to make coherent or consistent diagnostic assessments of what might constitute an “addictive design feature.” A better approach would be to specify what types of data businesses may process under what circumstances, rather than attempting to relate such rules to vague concepts like “addiction.”

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CCIA remains committed to working with the Legislature to develop balanced, effective policies that protect minors, respect individual rights, and are workable in practice. We welcome the opportunity to engage further on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Megan Stokes
State Policy Director
Computer & Communications Industry Association

¹⁹ Am. Psychiatric Ass’n, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Fifth Edition Text Revision* (2022).

²⁰ Amy Orben et al., *Social Media’s Enduring Effect on Adolescent Life Satisfaction*, PNAS (May 6, 2019), <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.1902058116>.

²¹ Off. of the Surgeon Gen., U.S. Dep’t of Health & Human Servs., *Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory, Social Media Has Both Positive and Negative Impacts on Children and Adolescents* (2023), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK594763/>.

²² *Id.*; see also Jennifer Marino et al., *Social Media Use and Health and Well-being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth: Systematic Review*, J. Med. Internet Rsch. (Sept. 22, 2021), <https://www.jmir.org/2022/9/e38449>.

²³ *NetChoice v. Yost*, 778 F. Supp. 3d 923, 955 (S.D. Ohio 2025).