



April 10, 2026

The Honorable Tate Reeves  
Governor of Mississippi  
550 High Street  
Sillers Building, 19th Floor  
Jackson, MS 39201

**Re: HB 1224 – “Provides relative to material harmful to minors” (Oppose)**

Dear Governor Reeves:

On behalf of the Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA), I write to request a veto of HB 1224. CCIA is an international, not-for-profit trade association representing a broad cross-section of communications and technology firms.<sup>1</sup> Proposed regulations on the intrastate provision of digital services therefore can have a significant, nationwide impact on CCIA members.

CCIA firmly believes that children are entitled to security and privacy online. Our members have designed and developed parental tools to individually tailor younger users’ online use to their developmental needs. For example, various services allow parents to set time limits, provide enhanced privacy protections by default for known child users, and other tools allow parents to block specific sites entirely.<sup>2</sup> This is also why CCIA supports implementing digital citizenship curricula in schools, to not only educate children on proper social media use but also help teach parents how they can use existing mechanisms and tools to protect their children as they see fit. However, the bill presents numerous constitutional and administrative concerns, as noted below:

**Mandatory social media warning labels—especially when not backed by research—raise First Amendment concerns.**

Much research on social media and adolescent health (including the National Academies of Sciences, the University of Oxford, the American Psychological Association, and the Journal of Pediatrics) has found that social media does not cause changes in adolescent health at the population level.<sup>3</sup> Even the Surgeon General’s Social Media and Youth Mental Health advisory referenced in A 4013 acknowledges the benefits of social media, including social connection, information sharing, and civic engagement.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, as a federal court recently noted, “nearly

<sup>1</sup> For more than 50 years, CCIA has promoted open markets, open systems, and open networks. CCIA members employ more than 1.6 million workers, invest more than \$100 billion in research and development, and contribute trillions of dollars in productivity to the global economy. A list of CCIA members is available at <https://www.ccianet.org/members>.

<sup>2</sup> Competitive Enterprise Inst., *Children Online Safety Tools*, <https://cei.org/children-online-safety-tools/> (last updated June 10, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> Regina Park, *The Internet Isn’t Harmful to Your Mental Health, Oxford Study Finds*, Disruptive Competition Project (Jan. 29, 2024), <https://project-disco.org/innovation/the-internet-isnt-harmful-to-your-mental-health-oxford-study-finds/>.

<sup>4</sup> Mike Masnick, *Warning: Believing The Surgeon General’s Social Media Warning May Be Hazardous To Teens’ Health*, Techdirt (June 18, 2024),

all of the research showing any harmful effects” for minors on social media “is based on correlation, not evidence of causation.”<sup>5</sup>

Mandated warning labels raise First Amendment concerns and have been ruled “compelled speech” in federal court, including in a similar case last year.<sup>6</sup> This is important to note especially as many federal courts have ruled against state-imposed content regulations on digital services.<sup>7</sup> Courts have permitted certain mandated warning labels, but only in cases when the science is absolute and incontrovertible, such as cigarette warnings.<sup>8</sup> Further, a warning provided too often is ineffective due to a phenomenon called “alert fatigue” or “alarm fatigue.” The constant repetition of a warning leads users to be more likely to completely ignore the warning. This has appeared in contexts ranging from cookie warnings under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)<sup>9</sup> to medical equipment alerts for nurses.<sup>10</sup>

### **Terms such as “addiction” or “addictive” in an online context lack an adequate scientific foundation.**

The bill uses the term “addiction” outside its defined scientific context. 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 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.’”<sup>11</sup>

The connected nature of social media has led to allegations that online services are negatively impacting teenager’s mental health. However, researchers argue that this theory is not well supported by existing evidence and often mirrors the “moral panic” associated with new

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<https://www.techdirt.com/2024/06/18/warning-believing-the-surgeon-generals-social-media-warning-may-be-hazardous-to-teens-health/>.

<sup>5</sup> Yost, 778 F. Supp. 3d at 955.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., *NetChoice v. Weiser*, No. 1:25-cv-2538, 2025 WL 3101019 at \*25 (D. Colo. Nov. 6, 2025). See also Aaron Mackey & Jason Kelley, *The Surgeon General’s Fear-Mongering, Unconstitutional Effort to Label Social Media*, EFF Deeplinks Blog (June 17, 2024),

<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2024/06/no-online-speech-should-not-have-warning-labels>.

<sup>7</sup> Mike Masnick, *California Politicians Embarrass Themselves By Calling For ‘Warning Labels’ On Social Media*, Techdirt (Sept. 12, 2024),

<https://www.techdirt.com/2024/09/12/california-politicians-embarrass-themselves-by-calling-for-warning-labels-on-social-media/>.

<sup>8</sup> Clay Calvert, *A Warning Against Warning Labels on Social Media Platforms*, AEIdeas (Jan. 28, 2025),

<https://www.aei.org/technology-and-innovation/a-warning-against-warning-labels-on-social-media-platforms/>.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Utz et al., *(Un)informed Consent: Studying GDPR Consent Notices in the Field*, CCS '19: Proceedings of the 2019 ACM SIGSAC Conference on Computer and Communications Security 973 (2019),

<https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3319535.3354212>.

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Chen Shaoru et al., *Determinants of Medical Equipment Alarm Fatigue in Practicing Nurses: A Systematic Review* (2023), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/23779608231207227>.

<sup>11</sup> Am. Psychiatric Ass’n, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Fifth Edition Text Revision* (2022).



technologies. Much research on social media and adolescent health (including the National Academies of Sciences, the University of Oxford, the American Psychological Association, and the Journal of Pediatrics) has found that social media does not cause changes in adolescent health at the population level.<sup>12</sup> Even the Surgeon General’s Social Media and Youth Mental Health advisory acknowledges the benefits of social media, including social connection, information sharing, and civic engagement.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, as a federal court recently noted, “nearly all of the research showing any harmful effects” for minors on social media “is based on correlation, not evidence of causation.”<sup>14</sup>

### **The bill’s requirements are not well-defined.**

HB 1224 contains several subjective requirements that do not allow covered businesses to know with certainty whether they are complying with the law. For instance, the bill prohibits “Falsely representing that the covered interactive computer service is not addictive to minor users when, in fact, it contains design features that make it addictive to minor users”, “Falsely representing that the covered interactive computer service is safe for minor users when, in fact, evidence based data establishes it is harmful for minor users; or “Failing to disclose to minor users or their parents or legal guardians the harmful effects to minors of using the covered interactive computer service, including any failure to disclose the frequency, scope, and severity of such harms.” However, there is no objective standard for adjudicating whether any given actor has engaged in these prohibited activities. Determining when specifically a given design feature contributes to a given user’s “addiction” to a service, what constitutes a “safe” site for minors, what level of evidence is sufficient to establish “safety,” or what quality/quantity of evidence must be disclosed is infeasible, particularly since each covered service will have unique features. These vague and subjective requirements risk arbitrary and inconsistent enforcement of the law.

### **The bill’s private right of action would result in the proliferation of frivolous lawsuits and questionable claims.**

Creating a new private right of action would open the doors of state courthouses to plaintiffs advancing costly, time-intensive claims based on subjective criteria. The vague standards noted above necessitate fact-intensive inquiries that make courts reluctant — or unable — to dismiss claims until more facts can be gathered in the discovery phase. These new dynamics would significantly affect litigants’ incentives. If defendants are routinely forced past the motion to dismiss phase and into full discovery, the cost of litigation itself becomes a coercive force, encouraging settlements unrelated to the strength of the legal claims. Moreover, these

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<sup>12</sup> Regina Park, *The Internet Isn’t Harmful to Your Mental Health, Oxford Study Finds*, Disruptive Competition Project (Jan. 29, 2024),

<https://project-disco.org/innovation/the-internet-isnt-harmful-to-your-mental-health-oxford-study-finds/>.

<sup>13</sup> Mike Masnick, *Warning: Believing The Surgeon General’s Social Media Warning May Be Hazardous To Teens’ Health*, Techdirt (June 18, 2024),

<https://www.techdirt.com/2024/06/18/warning-believing-the-surgeon-generals-social-media-warning-may-be-hazardous-to-teens-health/>.

<sup>14</sup> *NetChoice v. Yost*, 778 F. Supp. 3d 923, 955 (S.D. Ohio 2025).



costs would be passed on to Mississippi residents, disproportionately impacting smaller businesses and startups across the state.<sup>15</sup>

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While we share the concerns of the sponsor and the Committee regarding the safety of young people online, we encourage Committee members to resist advancing legislation that is not adequately tailored to this objective. We appreciate your consideration of these comments and stand ready to provide additional information as you consider proposals related to technology policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Mann  
State Policy Manager, South  
Computer & Communications Industry Association

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<sup>15</sup> Trevor Wagener, *State Regulation of Content Moderation Would Create Enormous Legal Costs for Platforms*, Broadband Breakfast (Mar. 23, 2021), <https://broadbandbreakfast.com/trevor-wagener-state-regulation-of-content-moderation-would-create-enormous-legal-costs-for-platforms/>.