

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 191

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 5, 2023

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman MARILYN PIPERNO

District 11 (Monmouth)

Assemblywoman KIM EULNER

District 11 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Urges Congress and President of US to enact “Kids Online Safety Act.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** respectfully urging Congress and the
2 President of the United States to enact the “Kids Online Safety
3 Act.”
4
5 **WHEREAS**, Social media use is associated with poor mental health
6 outcomes for minors; and
7 **WHEREAS**, By design, social media platforms create addictive
8 behavior patterns through likes, shares, and comments, which
9 trigger the brain’s reward center and elevate dopamine levels in
10 users; and
11 **WHEREAS**, As a result, over the past decade, the frequency of social
12 media use has risen among tweens (children between the ages of 8
13 and 12 years old) and teenagers (children between the ages of 13
14 and 17 years old); and
15 **WHEREAS**, The nonprofit research organization Common Sense Media
16 found that overall screen use among tweens increased by 17 percent
17 from 2019 to 2021, with 38 percent having used social media and
18 18 percent reportedly using social media every day; and
19 **WHEREAS**, The Pew Research Center noted even stronger trends
20 among teenagers, reporting that 95 percent use social media and
21 that 35 percent self-identify as frequent users; and
22 **WHEREAS**, Simultaneously, the prevalence of mental illness among
23 these populations has grown at an alarming rate; and
24 **WHEREAS**, According to the Centers for Disease Control and
25 Prevention, 36.7 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 17 report feeling
26 sad or hopeless, 18.8 percent have seriously considered attempting
27 suicide, and 15.7 percent have developed a suicide plan; and
28 **WHEREAS**, A seminal 2020 psychological study found strong
29 associations between increased social media use and higher rates of
30 mental illness among minors, especially adolescent girls; and
31 **WHEREAS**, Since then, several studies have published findings to
32 support the negative impact of social media on depression, anxiety,
33 and body dysmorphia disorders among children and adolescents;
34 and
35 **WHEREAS**, Despite this concerning research, social media companies
36 have yet to meaningfully address the mental health side effects of
37 social media use among children and adolescents; and
38 **WHEREAS**, The “Kids Online Safety Act” was introduced by United
39 States Senator Richard Blumenthal and various cosponsors and
40 would promote data safety, prevent and mitigate patterns of use that
41 indicate or encourage addictive behaviors, expand parental control
42 features, and require social media platforms to prevent promotion
43 of harmful material for minors; and
44 **WHEREAS**, By enacting the “Kids Online Safety Act,” Congress and
45 the President of the United States can address the growing mental
46 health crisis associated with social media use among children and
47 adolescents; now, therefore,

1 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New*
2 *Jersey:*

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4 1. This House respectfully urges Congress and the President of
5 the United States to enact the “Kids Online Safety Act.”

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7 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
8 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
9 President of the United States, the Speaker and the Minority Leader
10 of the United States House of Representatives, the Majority and
11 Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, and each member of
12 Congress elected from this State.

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STATEMENT

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17 This resolution urges Congress and the President of the United
18 States to enact the “Kids Online Safety Act.”

19 Social media use is associated with poor mental health outcomes
20 for minors. Social media platforms are designed to promote
21 addictive behavior patterns, encouraging its users to engage with
22 social media more frequently and for a greater length of time. As a
23 result, over the past decade, the rate of social media use has risen
24 significantly among both tween (children between the ages of 8 and
25 12 years old) and teenage (children between the ages of 13 and 17
26 years old) populations. Simultaneously, the prevalence of mental
27 illness among children and adolescents has grown at an alarming
28 rate. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
29 36.7 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 17 report feeling sad or
30 hopeless, 18.8 percent have seriously considered attempting suicide,
31 and 15.7 percent have developed a suicide plan. A seminal 2020
32 psychological study found strong associations between increased
33 social media use and higher rates of mental illness among minors,
34 especially adolescent girls. Since then, several studies have
35 published findings to support the negative impact of social media
36 on depression, anxiety, and body dysmorphia among children and
37 adolescents.

38 Despite this growing wealth of research, the social media sector
39 has yet to meaningfully address the mental health impact of its
40 technology on minors. The “Kids Online Safety Act” was
41 introduced by United States Senator Richard Blumenthal and
42 various cosponsors and would promote data safety, prevent and
43 mitigate patterns of use that indicate or encourage addictive
44 behaviors, expand parental control features, and require social
45 media platforms to prevent promotion of harmful material for

AR191 PIPERNO, EULNER

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1 minors. By enacting the “Kids Online Safety Act,” Congress and
2 the President of the United States can address the growing mental
3 health crisis associated with social media use among children and
4 adolescents.