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ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR

ASSEMBLY, No. 4014

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

ADOPTED JUNE 23, 2026

Sponsored by:
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District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

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Assemblywoman Peterpaul, Assemblymen Sampson, Freiman, Spearman, Senators Beach, Moriarty and Turner

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Social Media Research Center at four-year public institution of higher education.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Budget Committee on June 28, 2026, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/30/2026)

AN ACT establishing a Social Media Research Center and supplementing chapter 62 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. There is established a Social Media Research Center, hereinafter referred to as the center, at a four-year public institution of higher education, subject to appropriation. The purpose of the center shall be to carry out collaborative and interdisciplinary research to create and support the use of impartial and actionable science to advance efforts in understanding social media use, mitigating the negative impacts of social media, and promoting healthy and responsible social media use.

b. The Secretary of Higher Education, in coordination with the Office of Youth Online Mental Health Safety and Awareness in the Department of Health, shall select a four-year public institution of higher education to host the center based upon, at a minimum, institutional capacity, interest, and existing expertise. The host institution shall provide the administrative support necessary to facilitate the center's functioning, including oversight by the institution's existing research review procedures.

c. The center's research, analysis, and outreach activities shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) studying the impacts of social media consumption on the residents of the State and mitigating any negative impacts of such consumption;

(2) making policy recommendations to the Legislature, Governor, and key stakeholders to address the mental, physical, and behavioral health challenges posed by social media use, particularly for children and adolescents;

(3) establishing online courses and training modules concerning safe social media use, which shall be made available at no charge to schools in the State; and

(4) conducting research, and making recommendations, on such topics as may be required by law related to the impact of addictive social media behaviors on children and minors and the extent to which warning labels and other disclaimers reduce addictive social media behaviors.

d. State departments and agencies including, but not limited to, the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Education, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, and the Department of Children and Families may submit relevant research requests and questions to the center.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined <u>thus</u> is new matter.
Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
[1] Assembly ABU committee amendments adopted June 28, 2026.

e. The center may administer a grant program to advance its purpose. Any State-appropriated research funds made available under the grant program shall be awarded on the basis of scientific merit as determined by an open, competitive peer review process that assures objectivity, consistency, and high quality.

f. The center may solicit and accept any grants, gifts, donations, or other additional funds from public or private sources, which may be available for research related to social media.

2. Notwithstanding any other law or regulation to the contrary, State departments and agencies including, but not limited to, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, and the Department of Children and Families shall[1], to the extent practicable and feasible,[1] provide to the Social Media Research Center, upon request, the data necessary for the center to conduct its research. All data transmitted to and received by the center shall be provided in a manner that protects individuals' privacy and complies with applicable federal and State law. To the extent the center otherwise receives or transmits data, the center shall review and approve all relevant data use agreements or business associate agreements in compliance with all applicable privacy and security standards, including but not limited to, the "Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996," Pub.L.104-191 and 45 C.F.R. 160.101 to 164.534, or any other similar law.

3. One year following the establishment of the Social Media Research Center, and each year thereafter, the Social Media Research Center shall submit a report to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), regarding the work of the center. The report shall include, but not be limited to, information on the center's current research projects, the amount and sources of funding utilized, research requests and questions received from State departments and agencies, and the direction of the center's future research. If the center administers a grant program for social media research, the report shall also include information on the grants made, pending grants, and accomplishments of the program. The report shall also be made publicly available.

4. The Social Media Research Center and any recipients of grants awarded by the center shall provide copies of their research publications that were supported by those grants to the Governor, to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), and to any State departments or agencies that supplied data used in connection with that research, as soon as practicable following publication.

5. This act shall take effect immediately.