

Memorandum of Support

Stop Addictive Feeds Exploitation (SAFE) for Kids Act
S.7694 (Gounardes) / A.8148 (Rozić)

AAP strongly supports the implementation of the SAFE for Kids Act to support youth mental health and reduce the negative outcomes associated with the overuse of addictive feeds.

While declines in youth mental health are attributable to numerous factors, the growing use of social media platforms designed in ways that increase exposure to harmful content and encourage unhealthy patterns of use have contributed to these trends. Pediatricians see the impact of these platforms on their patients in practice and recognize the growing alarm about the role of social media in contributing to the youth mental health crisis.

This legislation will hold social media companies accountable for business practices designed to maximize profit and user engagement over social well-being. This legislation will:

- Provide users under 18 with a default chronological feed from users they already follow;
- Allow parents to block access to social media platforms for minors between 12:00am and 6:00am and limit the total number of hours per day that a minor spends on platforms;
- Authorize the attorney general to bring an action to enjoin or seek damages or civil penalties of up to \$5,000 per violation; and
- Authorize any parent/guardian of a covered minor to sue for damages of up to \$5,000 per user per incident, or actual damages, whichever is greater.

The collection of data from young people, its aggregation across platforms, and its processing through complex algorithms exposes young people to harmful, extreme content, such as hate speech or violent images. Only a small subset of online content undergoes human review, allowing questionable messages and stereotypes to wind up in children's laps. Pediatricians are particularly concerned about misleading health information that is shared and amplified online. Parents, rather than technology companies, should have easy methods for turning off trending recommendation feeds, setting up filters, and controlling what their family experiences online.

For these reasons, the American Academy of Pediatrics **strongly supports** the immediate passage of this legislation.

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