



This Bill Analysis reflects the contents of the bill as it was presented in committee.

# HOUSE BILL 301: Social Media Protections for Minors Under 16.

2025-2026 General Assembly

<b>Committee:</b>	Senate Education/Higher Education.	<b>If Date:</b>	April 29, 2026
	favorable, re-refer to Judiciary. If favorable, re-refer to Rules and Operations of the Senate		
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Reps. Zenger, N. Jackson, Almond, Willis	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Brian Gwyn*
<b>Analysis of:</b>	Third Edition		Committee Co-Counsel

**OVERVIEW:** *The 3rd edition of House Bill 301 would provide social media protection to minors under the age of 16 by:*

- *Prohibiting social media platforms from allowing minors under the age of 14 to create an account.*
- *Prohibiting social media platforms from allowing 14- and 15-year-olds to create an account without parental consent.*
- *Requiring social media platforms to use age verification to verify the age of account holders.*
- *Authorizing the Department of Justice to bring an action for unfair and deceptive trade practices against a social media platform that violates these provisions and to collect an additional civil penalty of up to \$50,000 per violation.*
- *Authorizing a civil action on behalf of a minor account holder and an award of up to \$10,000 in damages.*

**CURRENT LAW:** Article 51 of Chapter 66 of the General Statutes requires commercial entities that publish or distribute material harmful to minors on the internet from a website that contains a substantial portion of such material to verify the age of any person accessing the website.

Chapter 75 of the General Statutes includes various consumer protection laws, including a prohibition on unfair or deceptive trade practices in G.S. 75-1.1.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** The 3rd edition of House Bill 301 would require social media platforms to prohibit minors under 14 years old from having an account on the platform and would prohibit 14- and 15-year-olds from having an account without parental consent.

The platform would be required to terminate the account of any minor holding an account in violation of these prohibitions after allowing 30 days to dispute the termination. The platform would also be required to permanently delete all personal information held by the platform relating to the terminated account unless it is required by law to maintain the information.

The Department of Justice would be authorized to bring an action under Chapter 75 of the General Statutes for unfair and deceptive trade practices for any violation of these requirements as well as collect a civil penalty of \$50,000 per violation. If a platform's failure to comply is a consistent pattern of knowing or reckless conduct, the court could assess punitive damages against the platform.

A civil action could be brought on behalf of a minor account holder against a platform that knowingly or recklessly violates these provisions. Claimants could be awarded up to \$10,000 in damages. The action

Kara McCraw  
Director



Legislative Analysis  
Division  
919-733-2578

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would have to be brought within one year from the date the complainant knew or reasonably should have known of the violation.

Additionally, platforms would have to conduct age verification for new accounts using the potential account holder's preference of either anonymous age verification or standard age verification. Violation of this requirement would authorize the Department to bring an action under Chapter 75 of the General Statutes for unfair and deceptive trade practices as well as collect a civil penalty of \$50,000 per violation. For a consistent pattern of knowing or reckless conduct in failing to comply, the court could assess punitive damages against the platform.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This act would become effective October 1, 2025.

*\* Susan Sitze, counsel to House Judiciary 2, substantially contributed to this summary.*