



HOUSE BILL 301: Social Media & AI Safety.

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

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date:	June 9, 2026
Introduced by:	Reps. Zenger, N. Jackson, Almond, Willis	Prepared by:	Brian Gwyn*
Analysis of:	Fifth Edition		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *The 5th edition of House Bill 301 would (i) require addictive social media platforms to take steps to protect minors under the age of 16 and (ii) require content standards, policies, and training related to artificial intelligence (AI) in schools.*

SOCIAL MEDIA PROTECTIONS FOR MINORS

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: Part I would require addictive social media platforms (addictive platforms) to prohibit minors under 14 years old from having an account on the addictive platform and would prohibit 14- and 15-year-olds from having an account without parental consent. An addictive platform would be defined as an online forum, website, or application that meets all of the following:

- Has as its primary purpose or function to provide a forum for users to upload content or view uploaded content of other users.
- Has 10% or more of its daily active users who are younger than 16 years of age spend on average at least two hours per day on the online forum, website, or application on the days when using the online forum, website, or application.
- Employs algorithms that analyze user data or information on users to select content for users.
- Has any of the following addictive features:
 - Infinite scrolling.
 - Push notifications that cannot be disabled.
 - Displays personal interactive metrics that indicate the number of times other users have clicked a button to indicate their reaction to content or have shared or reposted the content.
 - Auto-play video.
 - Live-streaming or a function that allows a user or advertiser to broadcast live video content in real time.

Addictive platforms would not include an online service, website, or application where the exclusive function is email, audio communication, or direct messaging consisting of text, photographs, pictures, images, audio, or videos shared only between the sender and the recipients, without displaying or posting publicly or to other users not specifically identified as the recipients by the sender.

Kara McCraw
Director



Legislative Analysis
Division
919-733-2578

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

The Attorney General 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 an addictive platform's failure to comply is a consistent pattern of knowing or reckless conduct, the court could assess punitive damages against the addictive platform.

A civil action could be brought on behalf of a child account holder against an addictive platform that knowingly or recklessly violates these provisions. Claimants could be awarded up to \$10,000 in damages. The action would have to be brought within one year from the date the complainant knew or reasonably should have known of the violation.

Addictive platforms would also 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 Attorney General 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 addictive platform.

Additionally, addictive platforms would be prohibited from (i) using a child's user data to inform content recommendations to the child; (ii) using a child's user data to inform what commercial advertisements or promotions are shown to the child; or (iii) selling the child's user data to a third party.

The Attorney General 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 user data prohibitions as well as collect a civil penalty of \$50,000 per violation. If an addictive platform's failure to comply is a consistent pattern of knowing or reckless conduct, the court could assess punitive damages against the addictive platform.

Internet service providers, search engines, or cloud service providers would not violate the provisions of Part I solely for providing access or connection to or from an addictive platform not under the provider's control, including transmission, downloading, intermediate storage, or access software, to the extent the provider is not otherwise an addictive platform.

This section would become effective October 1, 2026.

SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE AI IN SCHOOLS ACT

CURRENT LAW: G.S. 115C-5(7a) defines the term "public school unit" (PSU) to include local school administrative units, charter schools, regional schools, laboratory schools, and the schools for the deaf and blind.

G.S. 115C-12(9c) requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to regularly revise the standard course of study, content standards, and support materials in core academic subjects.

G.S. 115C-81.90 requires the SBE to include computer science instruction in the standard course of study. Each PSU is required to offer (i) an elective introductory computer science course to middle school students and (ii) a computer science course that fulfills the computer science high school graduation requirement. G.S. 115C-81.90(b) requires the SBE to develop a list of approved introductory courses to be offered to middle school students. G.S. 115C-81.90(c) requires the SBE to adopt a list of courses that fulfill the computer science graduation requirement.

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Part 3A of Article 8 of Chapter 115C contains requirements related to school technology, including the requirement that local boards of education adopt internet safety policies.

G.S. 115C-270.30(b)(2a) allows mandatory training programs to contribute toward a teacher's continuing education credit requirements if the program is required by law or as a condition of employment and the teacher has met other content-specific requirements.

BILL ANALYSIS: Part II would require the SBE to update the standard course of study for computer science by adopting content standards for instruction on artificial intelligence (AI) that address AI literacy, including best practices for using AI tools responsibly. The SBE would be required to implement the revised computer science standards by the 2028-2029 school year.

The SBE would be required to update the AI standards every two years to keep up with advancements in AI. Additionally, the SBE would have to update the list of approved introductory computer science courses for middle school students and the list of approved courses that fulfil the computer science graduation requirement to reflect course alignment with the revised standards for use during the 2028-2029 school year.

By December 15, 2028, DPI would be required to submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee (JLEOC) on the adoption of the revised standards by the SBE and on the implementation of those standards in schools.

Part III would require DPI to develop a model policy on AI to serve as guidance for PSUs by December 31, 2026. The model policy would have to (i) include definitions of AI, generative AI, and AI tools, and (ii) provide guidance on developing student and staff AI literacy, including best practices for using AI tools safely, ethically, and responsibly. The Superintendent of Public Instruction would be required to ensure that PSUs have access to the model policy by January 15, 2027.

After reviewing the model policy developed by DPI, all PSUs would be required to adopt a policy on the use of AI by students and staff for educational purposes by June 30, 2027.

Part IV would require DPI to establish an evaluation framework for assessing the suitability of generative AI-powered educational tools for use in schools that addresses the following: (i) student data privacy, security and transparency, (ii) alignment with the standard course of study, and (iii) accessibility. DPI would be required to update the framework at least every two years to reflect changes in technology, evidence, and education practice.

DPI would have to maintain a publicly available list of AI tools that have been reviewed with the evaluation framework, and develop procurement guidance, qualified vendor lists, and other mechanisms to encourage the adoption of generative AI-powered education tools that have been reviewed with DPI's AI evaluation framework.

DPI would also be required to maintain a publicly available list of all generative AI-powered education tools that are being used in PSUs.

Part V would require DPI to partner with the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University to produce online professional development resources that train teachers on the use of AI by June 30, 2027. The Friday Institute would be required to provide 10 hours of self-paced modules that address the use of AI for educational purposes safely, ethically, and responsibly.

All teachers employed by local school administrative units, charter schools, and laboratory schools would be required to complete the professional development by June 30, 2028.

By December 15, 2028, DPI would be required to submit a report to JLEOC on the delivery of the professional development to teachers.

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EFFECTIVE DATE: Unless otherwise provided, the PCS would be effective when it becomes law.

** Susan Sitze, Samantha Yarborough, and Bryson Penley, Staff Attorneys with the Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.*