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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Expresses Strong Support of Congressional Hearings on Youth Social Media Use



Attorney General Ashley Moody and a bipartisan coalition of 52 attorneys general today expressed strong support for the hearings being conducted by the U.S. Senate Committee addressing the protection and safety of kids and teens using social media. Attorney General Moody is concerned about the long-term impacts of social media on youth. Those concerns have grown with the recent research from Facebook's own internal studies showing that social media is inflicting harm—in the form of increased mental distress, bullying, suicide and other self-harm—on a significant number of kids. Attorney General Moody signed on to the National Association of Attorneys General letter urging the committee to be thorough in its proceedings and to make clear how social media companies use children's and adolescents' data.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "As a mother of a middle schooler, I don't want social media companies targeting my son—enticing him to spend more time online; and, as Attorney General, I have serious concerns about the tactics and strategies Facebook is using to increase the length of time children and adolescents spend engaging with the platform. Inquiries like these Congressional hearings should provide the public with a better understanding of how and why our youth are being targeted by Big Tech."

Today's letter recognizes the hearings will uncover critical information about the business practices that social media companies are using to gain the attention of more young people on their platforms.

In May 2021, a bipartisan coalition of 44 attorneys general wrote a letter to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg urging the company to abandon its plans to launch a version of Instagram for children under the age of 13. Facebook ignored that request. Last week, in advance of the congressional hearings, Facebook announced intent to pause the project—that should be abandoned all together.

The letter states: “More engagement by the user equals more data to leverage for advertising, which equals greater profit. This prompts social media companies to design their algorithms and other features to psychologically manipulate young users into a state of addiction to their cell phone screens.”

To read the full letter, click here.

Attorney General Moody joined attorneys general from 51 states and territories in signing the letter, including: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.