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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Calls Correction of TikTok Age Ratings



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today called on Apple and Google to take immediate action and correct the application store age ratings of TikTok by the end of the year. Attorney General Moody and 14 other state attorneys general state that the change will help parents protect their children from being exposed to harmful content online.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “While our investigation into TikTok continues, it is important that action is taken now to better protect children from harmful content they might encounter on this China-owned social media platform. If TikTok isn’t banned outright, app stores should at the very least increase the age rating on the TikTok app to ensure parents know that this social media platform is not appropriate for users under the age of 17.”

In a pair of letters to Apple CEO Tim Cook and Google CEO Sundar Pichai, the coalition of attorneys general outlined the deceptive nature of the current ratings for the social media platform. The letters state that without taking the necessary steps to increase the age rating and change the accompanying age descriptions, the states reserve the right to take appropriate legal action against the companies.

The current ratings of ‘T’ for ‘Teen’ in the Google Play App store and ‘12+’ in Apple’s App store, inadequately characterize the objectionable content children are exposed to on TikTok. While TikTok does have a ‘restricted mode’ available, many users under the age of 13 lie about age in order to create a profile on the platform.

The TikTok app contains frequent and extreme alcohol, tobacco and drug use or references, sexual content, profanity and mature/suggestive themes. TikTok users can search for hundreds of thousands of hashtags related to these topics, with each search returning thousands of videos in the following categories—instructional videos about drug use, descriptions of drinking games,

recipes for cannabis edibles, demonstration of vaping tricks, pole dancing routines and millions of videos set to songs with explicit lyrics, which TikTok makes available to users in its music library.

TikTok not only allows users to find this type of harmful content, it also auto-populates such content for users through its search function and fills users' 'For You' page with dangerous recommended content from strangers.

The letter states: "Parents depend on the accuracy of age ratings. When parents are deceived into letting their kids download TikTok, there are real consequences. Exposure to drug, alcohol and tobacco content on social media makes kids more likely to use or experiment with those illicit substances in real life. And exposure to sexual content on TikTok can lead to pornography addiction and even the sexual exploitation of kids by online predators."

Attorney General Moody is joined in signing the letters by the following attorneys general: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Montana, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Utah and Virginia.

To view the letter to Google, click here.

To view the letter to Apple, click here.