

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 302 (Bauer-Kahan)

As Amended June 30, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Original Committee of Reference: HEALTH and JUD.

Prohibits, beginning with the 2027-28 school year, a local educational agency (LEA) from excluding students who do not use addictive feeds from extracurricular activities, and from using addictive feeds as the only means of contacting students or parents and guardians.

Senate Amendments

Current Committee Recommendation: Concur.

- 1) Delete the Assembly version of the bill.
- 2) Prohibit, beginning with the 2027-28 school year, an LEA from excluding a student from participating in any extracurricular activity, including sports and clubs, due to the student not having or using addictive feeds.
- 3) Prohibit, beginning with the 2027-28 school year, an LEA from using addictive feeds as the only means of contacting pupils or pupils' parents or guardians.
- 4) Encourage LEAs to inform students and parents or guardians of the restrictions on addictive feed communications in a student handbook or similar document made generally available to students and their parents or guardians.
- 5) Define addictive feed in accordance with existing law.
- 6) Define LEA as a school district, county office of education (COE), or charter school.

COMMENTS

What are addictive feeds? This bill defines addictive feeds, in accordance with existing law, as services in which media is generated and shared by users, and then displayed to a user's device based on information provided by or associated with the user.

Addictive feeds are often used by social media platforms to capture a user's attention and prolong their engagement. They commonly include features like the ability to continuously scroll through an infinite amount of content and automatically playing new videos without a user hitting a start button. Examples of addictive feeds provided by the author's office include TikTok, Instagram, YouTube Shorts, and Snapchat.

Under AB 302, schools and their extracurricular activities would need to find alternatives to addictive feeds when contacting students and their parents or guardians. In practice, this could mean that if a school club exclusively uses Instagram to organize meetings and communicate with parents, a student who does not have Instagram could not be barred from participating, and the club would need to find an additional communication method.

How addictive feeds may be used in school communications. There is currently limited data on the extent to which schools rely on social media, which can include addictive feeds, to communicate. Generally, for matters involving an individual student, school administrators directly contact parents and guardians through traditional means of email, phone calls, or written notices sent home with students. Recently, many schools have also launched dedicated school messaging services and apps to streamline and standardize communication. Many LEAs also maintain official social media accounts and pages to share updates, school news, and general reminders with students, their families, and community members.

This bill prohibits LEAs from using addictive feeds as the *only* means of *contacting* students and their parents or guardians. It does not prohibit LEAs from utilizing platforms that use addictive feeds to continue sharing general updates with parents and community members.

Anecdotal data suggests that some school extracurriculars rely primarily on social media to communicate about meetings and events, which then places pressure on students and families to maintain social media accounts. The author's office provided the following examples of how this has occurred:

- 1) A Southern California student was required to create an Instagram account in order to communicate with their high school baseball team. The student's parent did not approve of Instagram, but after objecting was told to start a profile on the student's behalf. This was not feasible, as the parent already worked two jobs.
- 2) A Southern California student was required to create a Snapchat account in order to communicate with members of their high school water polo team.
- 3) A Northern California student shared that they were removed from their student leadership position due to them not having an Instagram account.

Extracurriculars are managed at the local level, and some are primarily run and organized by students themselves. As of 2024, the Pew Research Center found that 61% of U.S. teenagers used Instagram and 55% used Snapchat, two platforms that feature addictive feeds and have allegedly been required for participation in school extracurriculars (see above). It is perhaps not surprising that students self-organizing into clubs would use these platforms to communicate with each other.

Addictive feeds and youth mental health. In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory about the effects of social media use on youth mental health. The advisory calls for urgent action by policymakers, technology companies, researchers, families, and young people to gain a better understanding of the full impact of social media use, maximize the benefits and minimize the harms of social media platforms, and create safer, healthier online environments. The advisory stated the following:

- 1) While social media may offer some benefits, there are ample indicators that social media can also pose a risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents.
- 2) Children are affected by social media in different ways, including based on cultural, historical, and socio-economic factors. Among the benefits, adolescents report that social media helps them feel more accepted (58%), like they have people who can support them through tough times (67%), like they have a place to show their creative side (71%), and be more connected to what's going on in their friends' lives (80%).

- 3) Studies have also shown a relationship between social media use and poor sleep quality, reduced sleep duration, sleep difficulties, and depression among youth.
- 4) More research is needed to determine the full impact social media use has on nearly every teenager across the country.

According to a 2020 article in the Journal of Affective Disorders, *Is social media screen time really associated with poor adolescent mental health?*, a greater amount of time spent on social media was associated with an increased risk of self-harm, depression, and lower levels of self-esteem in girls aged 13-15. Findings were similar for weekday and weekend use.

These findings have increased public concern over children's use of social media. According to the Pew Research Center, 56% of Americans support a social media ban for children under the age of 16. However, requiring students to have and use social media addictive feeds in order to participate in school extracurriculars restricts the ability of students and families to limit their exposure to addictive feeds.

According to the Author

Schools are increasingly reliant on social media and addictive feeds for communication and networking with students and families. Children are forced to join addictive platforms in order to participate in school clubs and activities that enrich their school experience. By forcing teens onto platforms which prey on them, schools are feeding into the increasing mental health crisis largely caused by social media usage. AB 302 prohibits schools from using addictive feeds as the sole form of communication with students or parents/guardians and ensures that students have access to after school clubs and activities without having to join potentially dangerous platforms.

Arguments in Support

According to the organization Common Sense Media, "AB 302 seeks to ensure that no student is excluded from extracurricular activities because they do not have or use an addictive feed. Participation in sports, clubs, and enrichment activities should be based on interest and effort—not on whether a child has joined a platform designed to keep them scrolling.

The bill also prohibits schools from using addictive feeds as the only method of contacting students or parents. Families should not be required to join algorithm-driven platforms to receive essential information about their child's education, safety, or school activities. AB 302 preserves schools' ability to use social media for broad outreach while ensuring that families always have a non-addictive, accessible communication option."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

This bill has been keyed non-fiscal by the Office of Legislative Counsel.

VOTES

ASM HEALTH: 12-2-2

YES: Bonta, Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Rogers, Carrillo, Mark González, Krell, Patel, Celeste Rodriguez, Schiavo, Sharp-Collins, Stefani

NO: Patterson, Sanchez

ABS, ABST OR NV: Chen, Flora

ASM JUDICIARY: 9-3-0

YES: Kalra, Bauer-Kahan, Bryan, Connolly, Harabedian, Pacheco, Papan, Stefani, Zbur

NO: Dixon, Macedo, Sanchez

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-4-0

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

NO: Sanchez, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 56-11-12

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Davies, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Solache, Stefani, Wallis, Ward, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO: Castillo, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Gallagher, Hadwick, Lackey, Macedo, Patterson, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Alanis, Bryan, Chen, Flora, Jeff Gonzalez, Hoover, Nguyen, Sanchez, Sharp-Collins, Soria, Valencia, Wicks

SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNeerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Strickland

ASM EDUCATION: 9-0-0

YES: Patel, Hoover, Alvarez, Bonta, Castillo, Garcia, Lowenthal, Pellerin, Zbur

UPDATED

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CONSULTANT: Sarah Cate Hawthorne / ED. / (916) 319-2087

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