



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

Sen. Gounardes, AMs Bores & Rozic Announce New Social Media Safety Legislation

ANDREW GOUNARDES February 6, 2025

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Two new bills would allow all users to turn off addictive algorithms on social media platforms and require warning labels for social media health impacts.

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Brooklyn, NY - New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes joined Assembly Members Alex Bores and Nily Rozic along with parents, policy experts and advocates today to announce new legislation designed to mitigate the harmful impacts of addictive social media

platforms.

The Stop Addictive Feeds Exploitation (SAFE) for All Act, sponsored by Senator Gounardes and Assembly Member Bores, would require social media platforms with algorithmic feeds to provide all users with the ability to turn off their user-personalization algorithm, allowing them to reclaim control over their feeds and better manage the platforms' potential negative impacts on mental health, attention span, insomnia and other well-documented harms.

The bill (*S.4506*) would also require platforms to allow users to turn off notifications and autoplay, as well as to set screen time limits if the user so chooses. And it would prohibit platforms from hiding settings behind so-called "dark patterns"—design practices that trick or manipulate users—like misleading language, illegible icons, and features that prevent users from deactivating, suspending or canceling their account. The legislation builds on Senator Gounardes' *SAFE for Kids Act*, passed last year, which prohibited social media platforms from offering addictive feeds to minors without parental consent.

A second bill (*S.4505*), sponsored by Senator Gounardes and Assembly Member Rozic, would require social media platforms that feature algorithmic feeds, push notifications and other addictive features to display a warning label about the platform's risk to users' physical or mental health, a policy that has been recommended by former US Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy and supported by forty-two state attorneys general. Such warning labels are already used for a range of other addictive products including alcohol, tobacco, plastic film packaging and video games.

Both proposals represent the next step in Senator Gounardes' ongoing effort to create a user-first digital landscape that prioritizes the health and safety of New Yorkers. Last year, he passed the *SAFE for Kids Act* and the *New York Child Data Protection Act*, *first-in-the-nation laws* designed to protect children from addictive algorithms and predatory data

collection on social media platforms. Last fall, Senator Gounardes and Assembly Member Rozic also introduced [the New York Children's Online Safety Act](#) to protect children from rampant sexual abuse and solicitation on gaming and social media platforms.

Adolescents who spend more than three hours a day on social media [face double the risk](#) of anxiety and depression—and U.S. teens are averaging [4.8 hours](#) of daily social media use. Nearly [half of adolescents](#) say social media makes them feel sad, depressed, lonely or isolated, and teens that use social media the most are nearly twice as likely as peers to rate their mental health as poor.

Yet the negative repercussions of excess social media use don't affect only those under 18; [studies](#) show similar links between social media use and depression in adults as well. Worldwide, over 59% of the population uses social media, with the average individual spending about two and a half hours a day on social media apps. In one survey, 40% of people aged 18-22 [said they felt "addicted"](#) to social media. In [the words](#) of a former Google engineer, social media companies are engaged in a "race to the bottom of the brain stem," tapping into users' fear, anxiety and loneliness to maximize user engagement at the expense of their mental health and well-being.

"The hard truth is that social media companies have wreaked havoc on the mental health of all of us, not just our kids," said **State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. "They do it in the pursuit of corporate profit, and everyday New Yorkers end up paying the price. When Big Tobacco was killing thousands of Americans, we stepped in with smart, thoughtful regulations to save lives. It's time to do the same with Big Tech. My bills to curb addictive algorithms and require warning labels on social media platforms are about creating a safer, healthier internet that makes our lives better instead of worse. They're about enabling New Yorkers to reclaim control of their own lives from big corporations. They're about ensuring the internet is a tool that serves us, not the other way around."

"As a state, we made strides last year to protect kids from social media addiction -- but as most people's Screen Time Report would attest, adults can be addicted too," said **Assembly Member Alex Bores**. "With the Safe For All Act, New York can lead the country in the fight to protect the mental health of all its citizens. It seems obvious to say, but empowering people to control addictive features on their own feeds is an essential way to let them control their own mental health."

"Building on past legislation, these bills establish clearer labeling of data collection practices and stronger privacy protections to ensure kids are shielded from online exploitation and abuse," said **Assemblywoman Nily Rozic**. "I am grateful to Senator Gounardes and Common Sense Media for their continued partnership in this important work. Our efforts in securing a safer, more transparent digital future are far from finished."

"Social media platforms are intentionally engineered to keep young users hooked – endlessly clicking, scrolling and sharing – without regard for their wellbeing," said **Liz Foley, Senior Director of Advocacy Campaigns at Common Sense Media**. "Warning labels aren't just common sense – they're an important part of an overall toolkit that will help New Yorkers understand and better manage how these platforms affect their lives. We are committed to supporting Senator Gounardes' efforts to cultivate a digital world that puts users back in control of their online experience."

"We applaud the leadership of state leaders in New York and across the country who are pushing forward to hold tech companies accountable for exploiting young people, and stand united against Big Tech's unrelenting attacks on any and all attempts to improve online safety and save kids' lives," said **Sacha Haworth, Executive Director of The Tech Oversight Project**.

“Parents and families need and deserve support helping kids navigate today’s online world safely, and we’re encouraged that these bills will spread much-needed awareness about the risks these platforms expose kids to every day and give us more tools to keep them safe,” said **Ailen Arreaza, Executive Director of ParentsTogether Action.**

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2025-S4505

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- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly

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