



TECHNET
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April 10, 2023

The Honorable Bobby Kaufmann
Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Iowa State House of Representatives
1007 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable Barb Kniff McCulla
Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Iowa State House of Representatives
1007 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable David Jacoby
Ranking Member
Ways and Means Committee
Iowa State House of Representatives
1007 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

RE: HF 526, A bill for an act relating to social media users under eighteen years of age, H. Ways and Means Hearing, TechNet Oppose

Dear Chair Kaufmann, Vice Chair Kniff McCulla, Ranking Member Jacoby and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

I write on behalf of TechNet respectfully in opposition to HF 526, which presents onerous burdens for social media companies and online platforms and for the Iowans who use them. We outlined these concerns with similar bills that have been heard this year in Iowa, and must continue to highlight these issues for the Committee, asking you not to advance the bill because of the negative repercussions outlined below.

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. TechNet's diverse membership includes dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents more than five million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance.

Our members are committed to online safety and work very hard to give users the tools to create the online experience that fits their needs and their family's needs. An educated consumer armed with technology is always the best protection against unwanted online interactions. TechNet members have empowered consumers with a number of tools to customize their online experience. Whether by activating

parental controls on streaming television services or smartphone apps that help families manage their digital life across all connected devices, families have options when it comes to filtering content online.

Additionally, there are many commercial, as well as free, content filtering and blocking solutions available that enable consumers to protect their families and themselves from illegal or inappropriate content. These solutions are widely available as both integrated and independent solutions for a wide range of technologies.

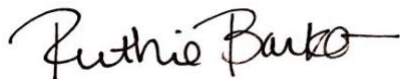
While it seems like a simple requirement to enact, the age verification requirements in this bill are problematic. Age verification results in capturing massive amounts of sensitive personally identifiable information. Because of the civil penalties included in the bill, social media platforms would likely have no choice but to treat all users as if they are under the age of 18, resulting in age verification to be required before an Iowa citizen accesses any content online.

This is a monumental undertaking, not just social media companies and online platforms, but a wide variety of companies with users in Iowa would be forced to take drastic measures in order to comply with this age verification requirement on the sites they offer. It is important to keep in mind that using a driver's license or government issued ID, as well as most other forms of age verification that would be compliant with the requirements of this bill, result in a new collection of sensitive personal information that is not currently being collected by social media companies and other online platforms. This is claiming to solve one problem, by mandating the collection of more data that potentially creates other issues.

While we appreciate the goal of this bill to protect minors online, it will effectively force all users to hand over tranches of sensitive and personally identifiable data – just to use the internet.

For these reasons, TechNet must respectfully oppose HF 526. TechNet will continue to work with the Ways and Means Committee on this issue and seeks common solutions that are in the best interest of Iowans. We thank you in advance for your consideration of our comments, please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Best,



Ruthie Barko
Executive Director, Colorado & the Central U.S.
TechNet

Cc: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee