



House Committee on Trade, Workforce, & Economic Development
House Bill 2874 by Rep. Suleman Lalani, MD
Testimony of the Texas Medical Association and Texas Pediatric Society
April 9, 2025

Honorable Chair Button, Vice Chair Talarico, and committee members:

Texas Medical Association (TMA) and Texas Pediatric Society (TPS), representing more than 59,000 physician and medical student members across the state, appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in *support* of House Bill 2874 on including provenance data on content shared via social media platforms.

Enhance Content Transparency and User Protection

TMA and TPS have advocated for including warning labels on integrated artificial intelligence (AI). This is rapidly transforming the way we interact with social media and technology. More research is required to understand the impacts of social media and AI on physical, developmental, and mental health.^{1,2} The American Psychological Association recommends educating youth on the risks of AI content generators, which can create false, damaging, and/or biased information, promote unrealistic body standards, and facilitate cyberbullying.³ To protect our youth, researchers and regulators need access to data on social media algorithms and AI outcomes. Including warnings about AI in the proposed warning label can help address these concerns.⁴

Cyberbullying on social media is already a significant concern, and the rise of deepfakes – content that has been altered to misrepresent someone as doing or saying something that was not actually done or said – exacerbates this issue by contributing to online harassment.⁵ Deepfake technology can create inappropriate and manipulated images, posing significant risks to youth, especially when their data and photos are misused to depict them in obscene and inaccurate ways. This can lead to increased sexual violence.⁶

We believe House Bill 2874 is vital for fostering transparency and accountability on social media platforms. By requiring large social media companies to attach and provide access to provenance data for photos, videos, and audio files, platforms can offer tools for users to better understand the origin and history of online content. This is particularly important in a time where misinformation and manipulated media can spread rapidly, impacting public health and individual well-being. Furthermore, the requirement to indicate when provenance data cannot be discerned further enhances transparency.

Restrict Data Mining of Minors

We also urge the committee to address the large-scale collection and potential exploitation of children’s and adolescents’ personal data. Social media companies can monitor, track, and target minors with advertising and content.⁷ Research shows that targeting youths with highly

individualized behavioral advertising is inappropriate, as they may lack the critical thinking and impulse control to recognize manipulation, putting them at risk for poor mental health outcomes and addictive behaviors.^{8,9} We strongly recommend restricting the data mining of minors' information. We recommend measures that restrict companies from collecting personal information from young users without parental consent, ban harmful targeted advertising, and provide tools, safeguards, and transparency to protect children and parents from online harms.¹⁰

Promote Healthy Technology Use

Another concern is the design of social media platforms, which may attempt to maximize young users' time online, fostering potentially unhealthy relationships with technology.¹¹ These addictive algorithms can amplify the “filter bubble” effect, pushing harmful content like eating disorders, violence, and suicidal ideation.¹² We urge the committee to consider the harmful impact of these addictive algorithms on youth, and we advocate public education on evidence-based guidelines to foster healthy technology use. Resources from the American Psychological Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend moderating social media use, setting screen-time limits, having age-appropriate conversations about risks, and regulating digital advertising to children.¹³

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. For answers to additional questions, please contact Matt Dowling, TMA director of Public Affairs and lobbyist, at matt.dowling@texmed.org; or Clayton Travis, TPS director of Advocacy and Health Policy, at clayton.travis@txpeds.org.

¹ <https://www.columbiapsychiatry.org/research/research-areas/child-and-adolescent-psychiatry/sultan-lab-mental-health-informatics/research-areas/smartphones-social-media-and-their-impact-mental-health>

² <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7785056/#S12>

³ <https://www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet/healthy-teen-video-viewing>

⁴ https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/pantheon_files/files/publication/Social%20Media%20Recommendation%20Algorithms%20Tech%20Primer.pdf

⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/deepfake>

⁶ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jols.12527?msocid=18b101e6d3526bfa37bd14bed2a36a2f>

⁷ <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2024/09/ftc-staff-report-finds-large-social-media-video-streaming-companies-have-engaged-vast-surveillance>

⁸ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/87565641.2016.1187033#d1e143>

⁹ <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-journal-of-law-and-medicine/article/algorithms-addiction-and-adolescent-mental-health-an-interdisciplinary-study-to-inform-statelevel-policy-action-to-protect-youth-from-the-dangers-of-social-media/EC9754B533553BDD56827CD9E34DFC25>

¹⁰ <https://www.commerce.senate.gov/2024/7/senate-overwhelmingly-passes-children-s-online-privacy-legislation>

¹¹ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/17456916231185057#bibr114-17456916231185057>

¹² <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13183222.2021.2003052#d1e93>

¹³ https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/Bright_Futures/BF4_HealthySocialMedia.pdf