

The Legal Side of the Scroll

Nebraska Passes Online Safety Law for Minors

LB 504 targets social media and digital platforms used by children

By: Alyssia Piersol

In Lincoln, Nebraska, lawmakers have approved a new law aimed at increasing online safety for children and teenagers. They are imposing new requirements on digital platforms, particularly those most commonly used by minors. The Age-Appropriate Online Design Code Act (LB 504), which was signed into law by Governor Jim Pillen in May 2025, took effect on January 1, 2026.

This is unlike the laws that restrict access to social media entirely; LB 504 is meant to focus on how the online services are designed. This is meant for websites, apps, and platforms. The law requires companies to take into account and limit some features for minors. Some of the features include: altering the way the screen appears for minors, and not allowing

infinite scrolling.

In a public statement, Governor Pillen had said, “The law is a way to hold companies accountable.” The bill also allows families to have stronger protection over their children.

Social media companies argued that these platforms are designed to keep users engaged for extended periods, and when key features are limited, it defies the whole purpose of the app.

News from across the state shows that many people have a mixed reaction to this new law. Many of the parents say that it is important to prioritize the kids’ well-being, as it gives most people confidence in online safety.

“Something needs to be done to protect the safety of underage children because many kids don’t understand the dangers of the

online world or how data mining works,” said Mrs. Laurel Rader, mother to two teenage students. “If this allows parents to have conversations with their kids about what they’re doing online, that’s always a win. I hope it works the way it’s intended and truly protects younger children.”

Although some of the critics have said they have concerns that the law could limit access to their content.

“It limits your ability to stay informed with what is going on in society, and

makes me feel held back because at this point my parents are responsible for limiting what I can and can’t see,” said senior Turner Happold.

Some critics of the bill have questioned how the companies will actually verify the user’s age.

LB 504 is enforced at the platform level, with companies expected to adjust features gradually. The law focuses on requiring reasonable safety measures rather than perfect enforcement. The law takes effect on January 1, 2026, but companies have until July 1st, 2026, to have their websites fully adjusted to fit this law.

“I have yet to notice any changes on social media platforms, yet I see this law subject to change in the future, with the platforms requiring a form of ID,” said ESU9 Educational Technology Specialist Dallas McClain.

The impact of LB 504 could extend beyond Nebraska’s borders, as other states may look to the law as an example of how to regulate digital platforms for minors. Nebraska is one of the first states to pass such a law.

Families are encouraged to stay informed about the law and explore the tools available. Experts advise parents to talk with their children about safe internet habits and to monitor usage. LB 504 is only one step toward protecting children, but it signals an important shift in how lawmakers and society view online safety for younger users.

“I would love for families to be able to handle this themselves, but if this helps them, then I am all for it,” said HS counselor Ms. Nikki Sjuts.

By: Gracelyn Jones

On May 20, 2025, a new bill was signed into Nebraska state law to increase parental rights over minors’ social media accounts. This law, the Parental Rights in Social Media Act, also known as LB383, will take effect on July 1st, 2026. This law requires social media companies to verify users’ ages and obtain parental consent before allowing anyone under eighteen to make an account.

This new law is designed to protect children from harmful online content and excessive screen time, and data collection by platforms.

Under the law, social media companies must enforce reasonable age verification to determine whether a user is a minor.

If the user is under the age of eighteen, platforms are prohibited from allowing the accounts to be created unless given permission by a legal guardian. This law also restrains companies from retaining information collected during the age verification process.

“We’re never going to give up on our kids. They are our future.

This law provides parents with the tools they need to protect our kids from big tech online companies and predators,” Governor Jim Pillen said while signing the child-protection legislation package that includes LB383.

The act further requires platforms to offer parents “tools” to manage their children’s accounts, including the ability to revoke consent, adjust privacy settings, and monitor activity. If parental consent is withdrawn, the platform must suspend or remove the minor’s account until consent is given. This law would help by giving parents more control and awareness over their children’s social media use.

Requiring parental consent and age

Parental Protections

The pros and cons of restricting children’s social media intake

verification makes it harder for minors to access inappropriate content and allows parents to monitor activity, adjust privacy settings, and limit screen time. The bill also helps protect children’s personal data by preventing companies from retaining age verification information. The law increases safety for minors while holding social media companies more accountable for protecting young users.

Laurel Rader said, “The purpose of this law is to protect kids. As a parent, it will facilitate conversation between my husband, me, and my kids. We can discuss the pros and cons, as well as what they think would be fair boundaries to set with social media. Anytime that parents and kids talk is a win-win!”

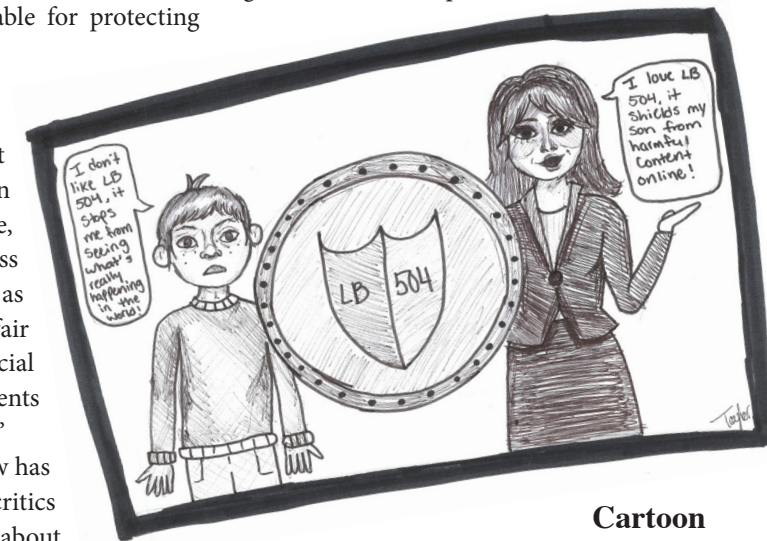
Despite the goals, the law has sparked debate. Some critics are raising concerns about user privacy and data security, warning that age verification systems could lead to the collection of personal information. The ACLU is also raising privacy concerns since the bill would require minors to provide digitized identification cards with the same information as a driver’s license or other government-issued ID.

Sophomore Addisen Bishop says, “While this law could have some benefits, many teens are responsible enough to use social media mindfully by age 14. Instead of strict restrictions, teaching online safety and responsible habits may be more effective. Parents often blame social media for negative outcomes, but isolating teens from these platforms could lead to feelings of loneliness and exclusion. Finding a balance between guidance and independence could help teens grow while still staying safe online.”

Others argue the law may limit minors’ access to educational resources, online communities, and free expression.

“We’re talking about minors under the authority of their parents, as in any other situation, the parents still have rights over what their children have access to,” said Tanya Storer

of the ACLU in an interview with First Alert 6. This statement reflects the ACLU’s position that while parents play an important role in guiding their children, government-mandated restrictions on social media raise concerns about privacy and constitutional rights. The organization argues that requiring age verification and parental



Cartoon
by: Taylor McDole

consent could lead to increased data collection and surveillance, potentially putting minors’ personal information at risk.

Enforcement of this law will fall to the Nebraska Attorney General, who has the authority to investigate violations and take legal action against companies that do not comply. If a company is to be in violation, it may face civil penalties, such as fines or court-ordered requirements. In addition to government enforcement, the law also gives affected individuals the right to bring private lawsuits. This means if a person believes their rights under the law have been violated, they can take the company to court and potentially seek damages.

Nebraska joins a growing number of states considering or implementing regulations aimed at addressing minors’ safety on social media. As the 2026 date approaches, officials say they will provide additional guidance to help families and companies understand the law’s requirements.

LB 140/504



LEGISLATIVE 504

- Purpose: Establish the Age-Appropriate Online Design Code Act, a law requiring online services and social media platforms to include protections for minors in how their platforms are designed and operate.
- Protects Minors Online: The law is aimed at reducing addictive design features (like infinite scroll, targeted recommendations, push alerts) that increase screen time for children and teens and limits data collection and targeted advertising to minors.

LEGISLATIVE 140

- It aims to prohibit students from using personal communication devices during instructional time, with some exceptions decided at the school level.
- The bill requires school policies governing the use of electronic communication devices by students



Graphic by: Turner Happold