



Division of Legislative Services

ISSUE BRIEF

Age Restrictions for Social Media

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Overview

Social media is a prominent source of entertainment and communication among all ages. Popular social media companies like Meta, Snap Inc., and X are largely responsible for the apps millions of users access each day. Apps like Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and X have minimum [age requirements](#), usually set at 13 or above. The companies often require users to enter their birthday into the app in order to access [age-appropriate content](#). However, the methods used to verify an individual's age can vary, and in some cases users easily take advantage of the lax verification rules. Accordingly, underage use of social media platforms and exposure to inappropriate content is a growing concern across the country.

In recent years, states have enacted laws that place more stringent protections on children's social media usage. All but [7 states and DC](#) have introduced legislation to target social media age verification laws as of March 2025. Earlier this month, Utah [became the first state](#) to pass legislation requiring app stores to verify users' ages and get parental consent for minors to download apps to their devices. This legislation has faced criticism from app stores like Google and Apple, who partnered with a [tech policy group](#) to lobby Utah legislators to reject the bill. These companies consider age a "[matter of privacy](#)".

Under [Utah's bill](#), the 'App Store Accountability Act', app stores are required to request age information once an account is created and verify the user's age. If the user is a minor, the app store account must be affiliated with a parent account, and parental consent must be issued before the minor downloads or purchases an app or in-app purchase. The bill also implements protections for personal age verification data and prohibits app store providers from enforcing contracts against minors without parental consent. This Act is the first legislation passed in the US that specifically targets app stores as opposed to individual social media platforms or apps.

Utah's legislation builds off various efforts to protect children from dangerous digital environments. App store age verification – a popular method of addressing this issue - has been endorsed by over 50 child advocacy organizations. These organizations recently formed a coalition, called the [Digital Childhood Alliance](#), to advocate for the "passage of app store laws". The coalition cites a [December 2024 analysis](#) recommending that Apple and other app store developers apply independent review for software age ratings to mitigate instances of minors accessing age-inappropriate content.

Delaware Legislation on Social Media

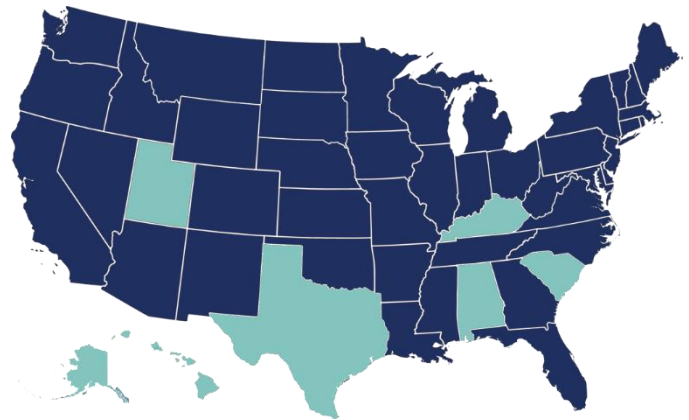
- In 2022, “[The Digital Citizenship Education Act](#)” was passed, requiring that the DE Department of Education maintain media literacy standards for schools throughout the state. No legislation regarding age restrictions or social media regulation has been passed.
- In 2024, Delaware’s House failed to pass [HB 265](#), which would have required an entity providing adult material harmful to minors (i.e. pornography) to verify the age of each individual accessing the service or face civil penalty. The bill was stricken on June 18th because House amendment 1, which sets a higher burden of proof, failed to pass.
- 13 states- including neighboring states like [New Jersey](#), [Maryland](#), and [Virginia](#)- have [enacted legislation](#) to regulate teen social media usage. Thus far this session, Delaware is not one of them.

Challenges of Restrictive Social Media Legislation

- **Criticism From Developers.** App store developers like Apple and Google, who consider age a matter of privacy, would prefer age verification to be left up to individual apps, stating that the ‘unnecessary’ need for sensitive documentation is “[not in the interest of user safety](#)”.
- **Restriction on Free Speech.** Various [civil rights groups](#) view age verification to be too restrictive on minors’ free speech, arguing that requiring parental consent or a form of ID can curb civil liberties.
- **Lack of Accessibility.** Legislation that would require a government-issued ID to obtain social media accounts may [prevent](#) undocumented residents or others unable

to access ID services from accessing these apps.

Recent Legislation on App Store Accountability by State



Digital Childhood Alliance, 2025

light blue = recent legislation, dark blue = n/a

Considerations for Delaware Legislators

- **Creating a Task Force.** Delaware legislators can consider creating a task force exploring the feasibility of app store accountability legislation, or alternative methods of protecting minors online.
- **Introducing Legislation.** Legislators may consider implementing a bill like Utah’s, requiring social media companies, app stores, or app developers to verify user age or otherwise protect minors online.

Additional Resources

- The National Conference of State Legislature’s [report](#) on the measures each state took in 2024 to protect children while using the internet and internet-based communication.
- This [POLITICO article](#) on ties between social media use and mental health.
- This [research article](#) from December 2023 finds social media platforms are in need of greater transparency, and calls for regulation of potentially harmful advertising practices that exploit children.