

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 499
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Public Health
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that there are rising concerns about the impact of social media usage on the mental health of youth across the country. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that children and adolescents who spend more than three hours a day on social media face double the risk of mental health problems, including anxiety and depression symptoms, and with nearly 95 percent of teens between 13 and 17 reportedly using social media, these impacts are being felt far and wide across numerous youth demographics. According to the American Psychological Association, a survey conducted in 2023 showed that the average daily use across seven popular social media platforms among U.S. teens was 4.8 hours. C.S.H.B. 499 seeks to address this issue by requiring social media platforms operating in Texas to issue a warning to a user each time the user opens the platform concerning the association between a minor's social media usage and significant mental health issues and to require users to verify they understand the warning before they are able to operate the platform.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 499 amends the Health and Safety Code to require a social media platform operating in Texas to do the following:

- display on the platform's landing page each time a user opens the platform a warning label concerning the association between a minor's social media usage and significant mental health issues; and
- ensure the user is unable to operate the platform until the user verifies the user understands the warning.

The bill requires the warning label to include information on available resources for persons experiencing significant mental health issues, including the phone number or link to the website for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, and a statement concerning the use of an individual's personal data by social media platforms and the addictive nature of social media usage.

C.S.H.B. 499 requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), not later than January 1, 2026, to adopt evidence-based rules regarding the form and content of the warning label required by the bill. A social media platform is not required to comply with the bill's requirements before April 1, 2026. The bill defines "social

media platform" and "user" by reference to Business & Commerce Code provisions regulating such platforms.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 499 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes a provision absent from the introduced requiring the warning label displayed by a social media platform to include information on available resources for persons experiencing significant mental health issues, including the phone number or link to the website for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, and a statement concerning the use of an individual's personal data by social media platforms and the addictive nature of social media usage.

The substitute also includes a specification absent from the introduced that the rules required to be adopted by the executive commissioner of HHSC regarding the form and content of the warning label are evidence-based rules.