

House Bill 783
Senate Amendments
Section-by-Section Analysis

HOUSE VERSION	SENATE VERSION (IE)	CONFERENCE
<p>SECTION 1. Title 4, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, is amended by adding Chapter 98C to read as follows:</p> <p><u>CHAPTER 98C. LIABILITY FOR ONLINE IMPERSONATION</u></p> <p><u>Sec. 98C.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:</u></p> <p><u>(1) "Online impersonation" means a person's use of an individual's name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness through social media without that individual's consent or, if the individual is a minor, the consent of that individual's parent, legal guardian, or managing conservator.</u></p> <p><u>(2) "Photograph" includes any photograph or photographic reproduction, still or moving, or any videotape or live television transmission of any individual in which the individual is readily identifiable.</u></p> <p><u>(3) "Readily identifiable" means identifiable using only the naked eye to reasonably determine the identity of an individual in a photograph.</u></p> <p><u>(4) "Social media" means a form of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.</u></p> <p><u>Sec. 98C.002. APPLICABILITY OF CHAPTER. This chapter does not apply to a law enforcement agency or a law enforcement agency employee acting within the scope of employment in investigating Internet crimes.</u></p>	<p>SECTION 1. Title 4, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, is amended by adding Chapter 98C to read as follows:</p> <p><u>CHAPTER 98C. LIABILITY FOR ONLINE IMPERSONATION</u></p> <p><u>Sec. 98C.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:</u></p> <p><u>(1) "Online impersonation" means a person's use of an individual's name, voice, signature, or likeness in visual material on a social media platform without that individual's consent or, if the individual is a minor, the consent of that individual's parent, legal guardian, or managing conservator.</u> [FA1(1)-(2)]</p> <p><u>(3) "Visual material" has the meaning assigned by Section 43.26, Penal Code.</u> [FA1(3)]</p> <p><u>(2) "Social media platform" has the meaning assigned by Section 120.001, Business & Commerce Code.</u></p> <p><u>(4) [Deleted by FA1(3)]</u></p> <p><u>Sec. 98C.002. APPLICABILITY OF CHAPTER. This chapter does not apply to a law enforcement agency or a law enforcement agency employee acting within the scope of employment in investigating Internet crimes.</u></p>	

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Sec. 98C.003. CONSTRUCTION OF CHAPTER. This chapter may not be construed to impose liability on an interactive computer service as defined by 47 U.S.C. Section 230(f) for content provided by another person.

Sec. 98C.004. LIABILITY FOR ONLINE IMPERSONATION; EXCEPTION. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), a person is liable to another person injured by the person's online impersonation if the person knowingly and with the intent to harm, defraud, intimidate, or threaten the injured person used the online impersonation to create a false identity.

(b) A person is not liable for an online impersonation of which a purpose is satire or parody

Sec. 98C.005. DAMAGES. (a) A claimant who prevails in an action under this chapter shall be awarded actual damages, including expenditures made by the claimant related to counseling, identity theft, or libel. The defendant's profits attributable to the defendant's online impersonation of the claimant may be considered in the computation of actual damages.

(b) In addition to an award under Subsection (a), a claimant who prevails in an action under this chapter may recover exemplary damages of not less than \$500.

(c) The court shall award costs and reasonable attorney's fees to the prevailing party in any action under this chapter.

Sec. 98C.006. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF. A court in which an action is brought under this chapter, on the motion of a

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(1) the person knowingly and with the intent to harm, defraud, intimidate, or threaten the injured person used the online impersonation to create a false identity; and

(2) the online impersonation is, to a reasonable person, virtually indistinguishable from an actual person. [FA1(4)]

(b) A person is not liable for an online impersonation of which a purpose is satire or parody.

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<u>claimant depicted in the defendant's online impersonation, may issue a temporary restraining order or a temporary or permanent injunction to restrain and prevent the online impersonation of the claimant.</u>	<u>claimant depicted in the defendant's online impersonation, may issue a temporary restraining order or a temporary or permanent injunction to restrain and prevent the online impersonation of the claimant.</u>	
<u>Sec. 98C.007. CAUSE OF ACTION CUMULATIVE. The cause of action created by this chapter is cumulative of any other remedy provided by common law or statute.</u>	<u>Sec. 98C.007. CAUSE OF ACTION CUMULATIVE. The cause of action created by this chapter is cumulative of any other remedy provided by common law or statute.</u>	
SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.	SECTION 2. Same as House version.	