



The Honorable Zack Stephenson
Chair, House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee
5th Floor, Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Opposition House File 4138 (Stop Harms from Addictive Social Media Act)

Dear Chair Stephenson and Members of the House Commerce Committee,

While we share the goal of ensuring the safety and mental well-being of Minnesota's youth, we believe that the current language of this bill creates unintended consequences that will disproportionately harm Black, Brown, and low-income communities.

Increased Digital Surveillance of Marginalized Communities

HF 4138 requires social media platforms to implement commercially reasonable age estimation and verification methods. Historically, verification translates to the collection of sensitive data, such as government IDs or biometric scans.

For communities already over-policed and over-surveilled, the mandate for platforms to collect more personal data is a civil rights concern. We worry this data will be stored, sold, or accessible to law enforcement, creating a digital "paper trail" for youth who are simply seeking community online.

Many age-estimation technologies rely on AI and facial analysis, which have documented higher error rates for people with darker skin tones. This could lead to the systemic exclusion of Black youth from digital spaces due to technical mismatches.

Barriers to Digital Equity and Connectivity

The bill mandates "verifiable parental consent" for users under 15. While this sounds protective, it ignores the "Digital Divide" that exists in many Minnesota households.

For parents working multiple jobs, those with limited English proficiency, or households without traditional credit cards (often used for verification), these requirements act as a barrier.

Many youth in our community find essential support systems, educational resources, and social justice movements through these platforms. By creating high friction for entry, we risk cutting off vulnerable youth from the very tools they use to organize and seek help.

Vague Definitions and Censorship

The bill's definitions of "addictive interface features" and "profile-based feeds" are overly broad.

Algorithms often help marginalized voices find an audience that traditional media ignores. If platforms are forced to strip away personalized feeds to avoid litigation, it may become harder for Black-led movements, local artists, and minority-owned businesses to reach their own communities.

The bill allows for civil actions that could lead to defensive filtering by companies. To avoid lawsuits, platforms over-censor content related to sensitive but necessary topics like racial justice, police reform, or reproductive health under the guise of protecting minors.

We urge the Committee to reconsider the age-verification mandates and instead focus on comprehensive digital literacy programs and stricter data-broker regulations that protect all Minnesotans without creating new systems of surveillance.

Sincerely,

Taycier Elhindi
President, National Action Network - Minneapolis