

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Representative Bill Elam

DISTRICT 8

House Bill 318

SOCIAL MEDIA/MINORS

Sponsor Statement – Version A

House Bill 318 is focused on giving parents clearer tools and stronger safeguards as they help their children navigate an increasingly complex digital environment.

Social media platforms are designed to promote engagement and time spent on their services. For minors, certain design features and data practices can present heightened risks, including impacts on sleep, attention, privacy, and overall wellbeing. Parents are often placed in the difficult position of managing these systems without meaningful defaults or clear guardrails.

HB 318 takes a measured and targeted approach. The bill does not regulate speech or online content. Instead, it addresses commercial conduct and product design, specifically how social media platforms structure accounts and features for known minors, as defined in the bill through reasonable age assurance practices.

Under the legislation, known minors would receive, by default, a content delivery system that does not rely on addictive design features. Parents may choose to opt in to additional features if they determine that is appropriate for their child. The bill also limits late-night and parent-designated school-hour notifications, restricts targeted advertising to minors, and strengthens privacy protections related to personal data and precise location tracking.

The intent is to ensure that families, not platform algorithms, are making the primary decisions about a child's online experience.

Enforcement would occur through the Attorney General under Alaska's existing consumer protection framework. The bill does not create a private right of action, does not establish a new regulatory agency, and does not require disclosure of proprietary algorithms or trade secrets. It authorizes reasonable rulemaking to support practical, privacy-protective implementation.

HB 318 is narrowly focused on protecting minors while respecting constitutional protections and parental authority. It reflects a straightforward principle: when it comes to children, parents should have meaningful defaults, clearer choices, and stronger tools.