

AG Fitch Calls for Congress to Require Surgeon General Warning on Social Media Platforms



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Lynn Fitch

(Jackson, Mississippi) In a letter to Congress, Attorney General Lynn Fitch and 41 other attorneys general today called on lawmakers to require a U.S. Surgeon General warning on all algorithm-driven social media platforms. The letter comes amidst growing scrutiny of social media companies for their role in generational harm to young people's mental health.

“Social media platforms pose a serious risk to our children and their futures depend on our willingness to protect them in this digital era,” **said Attorney General Lynn Fitch**. “States are taking legislative and legal action, and it is past time the federal government stepped up to help parents shield their children from these significant mental and physical harms. I am proud to join my colleagues from across the country to ensure our children receive the protection they desperately need and deserve.”

The attorneys general cited growing bodies of research that link young people's use of these platforms to psychological harm, including depression, anxiety, and even suicidal thoughts in kids and teens. They also note how platforms feature irresistible algorithmic recommendations, infinite scrolling, and a constant stream of notifications designed to keep kids relentlessly engaged on the platforms, even at the expense of taking breaks, engaging in other activities, or sleeping.

Attorney General Fitch has been a leading voice for children's online safety. In fact, last year, Mississippi was one of 42 states that filed lawsuits against Meta. [In her complaint, Attorney General Fitch laid out the argument](#), based on internal documents obtained from Meta, that the company intentionally designed its platforms to exploit the vulnerabilities of an adolescent's developing brain in order to maximize profits.

Additionally, [Attorney General Fitch's worked with the Mississippi Legislature this year to pass the Walker Montgomery Protecting Children Online Act](#) (HB 1126). The law requires that social media companies develop strategies to prevent children from harmful materials online, like grooming by predators, promotion of self-harm and eating disorders, stalking and bullying, and glorification of drug abuse.

It is named for a Starkville teen, Walker Montgomery, who tragically lost his life after becoming a victim of a social media sextortion scam. Social media companies sued to block the commonsense measure from taking effect, and [AG Fitch recently filed a brief](#) in the Fifth Circuit of Appeals urging the Court to vacate the preliminary injunction to help parents and states protect children from this unprecedented threat to their well-being.

In a video Attorney General Fitch created to [launch the #BeAwareBeforeYouShare campaign](#), which is aimed at raising awareness of social media's dangerous impact on children's mental and physical wellbeing, [Walker Montgomery's father recalls his son's story](#).

Despite these state-led efforts to address the harms caused my social media platforms, Attorney General Fitch and her colleagues say federal action is also necessary because "social media platforms have demonstrated an unwillingness to fix the problem on their own."

Along with AG Fitch, attorneys general from California, Colorado, Kentucky, New Jersey, New York, and Tennessee co-led the letter to Congress.

Joining them are the attorneys general from Alabama, American Samoa, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Click [HERE](#) to read the full letter.

Click [HERE](#) for the #BeAwareBeforeYouShare media kit.

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