

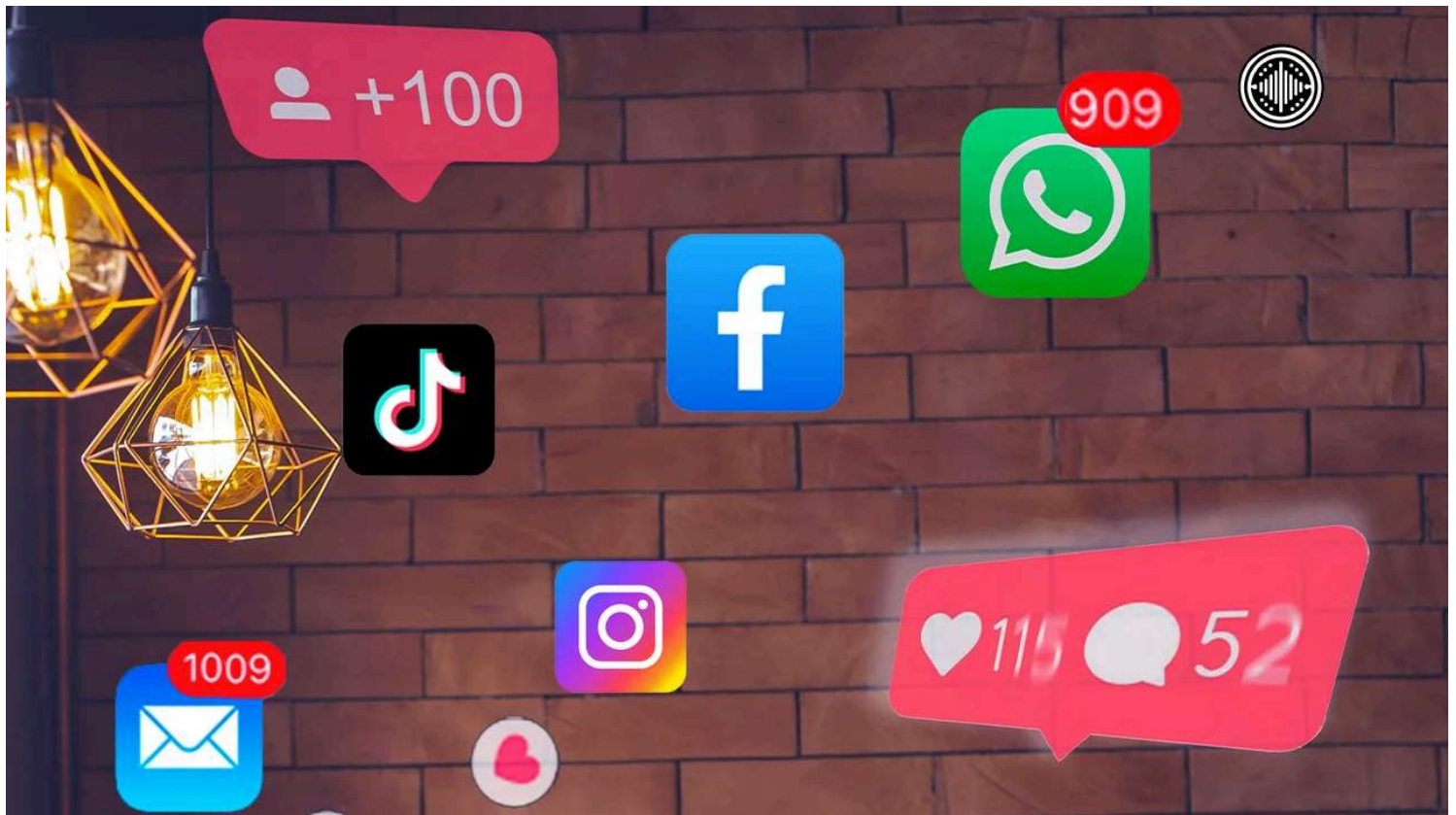
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## Minnesota Becomes First State to Mandate Mental Health Warnings on Social Media

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Minnesota will become the first state in the country to require mental health warning labels on social media platforms, starting July 1, 2026. Under a new law signed by Governor Tim Walz, users will see a pop-up message warning them about the possible mental health risks before accessing posts, photos, or videos.

The law, led by Democratic Representative Zack Stephenson of Coon Rapids, aims to make people, especially younger users, think twice about the amount of time they spend online. Stephenson compared the warnings to those found on tobacco and alcohol products and

said the Minnesota Department of Health will be responsible for writing the message. Users will be required to click to acknowledge the risks before continuing on the platform.

“I think the evidence is pretty clear that social media is tied to depression, anxiety, self-harm, and more,” Stephenson said. “These warnings could encourage someone to take a break, or even put the phone down altogether.”

## Industry Pushback

But not everyone is on board. NetChoice, a group representing social media companies, has argued the law goes too far and violates the First Amendment. Paul Taske, co-director of NetChoice’s litigation center, said it’s wrong for the government to force private companies to spread messages they disagree with.

“It forces platforms to speak on behalf of the state, which goes against what the courts have ruled repeatedly,” Taske said. He added that Minnesota already passed a separate law this month requiring companies to explain how their algorithms work, which NetChoice is also challenging in court.

Taske said the government should instead focus on educating the public through its own channels instead of forcing platforms to show warnings.

“The government can and should use its own voice to spread awareness,” he said. “It shouldn’t be forcing private companies to do it for them.”

Still, supporters of the law say it’s a step in the right direction. The requirement also includes providing users with mental health support links, such as the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Companies that don’t comply could face civil penalties and investigations.

Erich Mische, CEO of Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE), said these labels may not solve everything, but they matter.

“They’re not a silver bullet, but warning labels make a big impact,” Mische said. “They can help families realize just how serious the risks are.”

Bridgette Norring, who lost her teenage son Devin to a drug overdose in 2020, supports the law. Devin bought a pill he thought was Percocet from another teen on Snapchat. Norring believes that if a warning had popped up, her son might have reconsidered his actions.

“If Devin had seen something telling him how dangerous social media could be, maybe he would’ve taken a step back,” she said. “This is about giving kids a chance to stop and think.”

While a part of the bill that would have reminded users of how long they’ve been online didn’t make the final cut, lawmakers suggest it could return in future legislation. Unless a legal challenge succeeds, Minnesota’s new warning label law will go into effect in the summer of 2026.