



The Florida House of Representatives

Paul Renner
Speaker

NEWS RELEASE

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Florida House Fights to Protect Children

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (*January 11, 2024*) — Today, Florida House Speaker Paul Renner (R-Palm Coast) held a press conference at the Florida Historic Capitol to highlight House Bills 1 and 3. These pieces of priority legislation aim to protect children from accessing adult websites and from technology that is a proven detriment to their mental health. In his address to the Florida House on Opening Day, Speaker Renner vowed to win the battle against pornographic websites and social media companies to protect Florida's children.

"Our children are in a fight for their lives against those who wish to obliterate the distinction between adulthood and childhood, and with House Bills 1 and 3, we will help them win," said Speaker Renner. "We are losing our children to social media and adult content websites. We have to give parents a fighting chance against these tech companies that prey on our kids to pad their profit margins." Speaker Renner pointed to studies that show children suffer from higher rates of depression, suicidal thoughts, and negative self-image as a result of social media use.

House Bill 1, Social Media Use for Minors

HB 1, by Representatives Tyler Sirois (R-Merritt Island) and Fiona McFarland (R-Sarasota), protects Florida's children from addictive and harmful social media platforms by prohibiting those under the age of 16 from accessing social media and requiring social media platforms to employ age verification methods. These platforms intentionally use design features, including addictive algorithms and continuous scrolling, to keep them on these platforms for excessive

amounts of time. Overuse of social media has been shown to have a detrimental impact on children's mental health and well-being.

"Clinical depression, self-harm behaviors, and suicide rates have all increased drastically since social media has become prevalent among adolescents," said Representative Sirois. "We cannot allow social media companies to take over and ruin our children's lives."

House Bill 3, Online Access to Materials Harmful to Minors

HB 3, by Representatives Chase Tramont (R-Port Orange) and Toby Overdorf (R-Palm City), protects children under 18 from harmful online content, such as child pornography, by requiring age verification by websites and applications that publish material harmful to minors. The bill requires that all data collected to verify the age of a person attempting to obtain access to harmful material must be deleted immediately.

"The problem today is that most websites and apps assume everyone to be an adult, which means that children can easily access adult content," said Representative Tramont. "We must safeguard our children from exposure to content that is age-inappropriate and protect their childhood."

For more information on these bills, visit www.myfloridahouse.gov.

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