

House Bill 829

By: Representatives Beckles of the 96<sup>th</sup>, Hugley of the 141<sup>st</sup>, Frye of the 122<sup>nd</sup>, Williams of the 168<sup>th</sup>, Flournoy of the 74<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
2 elementary and secondary education, so as to require the Department of Education to publish  
3 guidance relating to best practices for secure browsing and parental controls; to amend  
4 Chapter 5 of Title 39 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to online internet  
5 safety, so as to require the Attorney General publish an annual report documenting its  
6 enforcement actions relating to online safety; to provide for related matters; to repeal  
7 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and  
11 secondary education, is amended by revising Code Section 20-2-149, relating to programs  
12 for educating students regarding online internet safety, as follows:

13 "20-2-149.

14 (a)(1) The Department of Education shall develop model programs for educating  
15 students regarding online safety while using the internet, taking into consideration  
16 educational materials on this topic developed by other states as well as any other

17 materials suggested by education experts, child psychologists, and technology companies  
18 that promote child online safety issues.

19 (2) The model programs provided for in this subsection shall include one or more model  
20 programs for students in grades six through 12 which:

21 (A) Shall include instruction regarding:

22 (i) The social, emotional, and physical effects of social media on users;

23 (ii) The effects of social media on the mental health of users, particularly teenagers;

24 (iii) The distribution of disinformation and misinformation on social media;

25 (iv) How social media influences thoughts and behaviors;

26 (v) The permanency and risks of sharing materials online;

27 (vi) The dangers of viewing material harmful to minors;

28 (vii) Age verification procedures on websites and social media;

29 (viii) How to maintain personal security and identify cyberbullying, predatory  
30 behavior, and human trafficking on the internet and social media; and

31 ~~(vii)~~(ix) How to report suspicious behavior encountered on the internet and social  
32 media to appropriate persons and authorities; and

33 (B) May include information regarding the benefits of social media use, such as  
34 supporting career readiness for future academic or employment opportunities, sharing  
35 information with familiar family and friends, and safely connecting with other users  
36 with similar interests.

37 (3) The Department of Education shall periodically update the model programs provided  
38 for in this subsection to reflect changes in internet and social media use, emergent  
39 technologies, social and psychological research, and information concerning new threats  
40 to teenagers and young adults using social media platforms and other online  
41 communication technologies.

42 (4) The Department of Education shall publish on its website information relating to the  
43 model programs provided for in this Code section, including recommended curricula and

44 instructional materials as updated periodically as provided in this subsection, along with  
45 guidance relating to best practices for secure browsing and parental controls. The  
46 Department of Education shall provide technical assistance in addition to such model  
47 programs and recommended curricula and instructional materials to aid any local board  
48 of education that may elect to incorporate one or more components of internet and social  
49 media safety into its instructional program.

50 (5) The Department of Education shall evaluate the report published by the Attorney  
51 General pursuant to subsection (g) of Code Section 39-5-5 in assessing the reach and  
52 impact of online safety education efforts.

53 (b) Each local board of education may incorporate into its instructional program a  
54 component on online internet safety, including social media safety, to be taught on a  
55 schedule as determined by the local board of education."

56 **SECTION 2.**

57 Chapter 5 of Title 39 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to online internet  
58 safety, is amended by adding a new subsection to Code Section 39-5-5, relating to  
59 commercial entity age verification, access to material harmful to minors, data retention,  
60 penalties, and exclusions, to read as follows:

61 "(g) The Attorney General shall publish an annual report documenting enforcement actions  
62 taken under this Code section."

63 **SECTION 3.**

64 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.