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ROB BONTA

Attorney General

Attorney General Bonta: Unredacted Federal Lawsuit Against Meta “Damning”

Press Release / *Attorney General Bonta: Unredacted Federal Lawsuit Against M...*

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OAKLAND — California Attorney General Rob Bonta today announced the public release of a largely unredacted copy of the federal complaint filed by a bipartisan coalition of 33 attorneys general against Meta Platforms, Inc. and affiliates (Meta) on October 24, 2023. Co-led by Attorney General Bonta, the coalition is alleging that Meta designed and deployed harmful features on Instagram and Facebook that addict children and teens to their mental and physical detriment. As originally filed, however, much of the federal complaint included information conditionally under seal. Based on the company's own documents, the removal of the redactions provides additional context for the misconduct that the attorneys general allege against Meta.

“Meta knows that what it is doing is bad for kids — period. Thanks to our unredacted federal complaint, it is now there in black and white, and it is damning,” **said Attorney General Bonta**. “We will continue to vigorously prosecute this matter.”

Highlights from the newly revealed portions of the complaint include the following:

- Mark Zuckerberg personally vetoed Meta’s proposed policy to ban image filters that simulated the effects of plastic surgery, despite internal pushback and an expert consensus that such filters harm users’ mental health, especially for women and girls. Complaint ¶¶ 333-68.
- Despite public statements that Meta does not prioritize the amount of time users spend on its social media platforms, internal documents show that Meta set explicit goals of increasing “time spent” and meticulously tracked engagement metrics, including among teen users. Complaint ¶¶ 134-150.
- Meta continuously misrepresented that its social media platforms were safe, while internal data revealed that users experienced harms on its platforms at far higher rates. Complaint ¶¶ 458-507.
- Meta knows that its social media platforms are used by millions of children under 13, including, at one point, around 30% of all 10–12-year-olds, and unlawfully collects their personal information. Meta does this despite Mark Zuckerberg testifying before Congress in 2021 that Meta “kicks off” children under 13. Complaint ¶¶ 642-811.

A copy of the largely unredacted complaint can be found **here**.

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