ACLU Minnesota

April 28th, 2026

Senate Commerce Committee_SF 4696 oppose
Chair Klein & members of the committee,

We are writing in opposition to SF 4696. Protecting children online is an important and shared goal; however, the "app-by-app" age verification model in this bill creates an unnecessary and harmful trade-off between child safety and the privacy, security, and constitutional rights of Minnesotans. By requiring individual platforms to independently verify age and manage parental consent, the legislation would produce a fragmented system of surveillance that exposes families to significant risk without delivering meaningful protections.

SF 4696 would force families to share sensitive personal information—often including government identification or biometric data—with numerous private companies. Each verification requirement creates a new point of vulnerability for data breaches, identity theft, and misuse by bad actors. Collectively, this approach results in widespread data over-collection and undermines the long-standing right to browse the internet anonymously, a cornerstone of free expression and personal privacy.

In order to comply with this law, the platforms must collect information about both parents and children and families must share sensitive data with dozens of companies, multiplying the risk of misuse or data breaches. Data breaches, according to the Identity Theft Resource Center (ITRC), affected over 278,800,000 people in 2025. Data breaches in the past include many of the companies that would be regulated by this bill including 200+ million Twitter users in 2022[1], 533 million Facebook users in 2021[2], and 419 million Facebook users in 2019[3]. An additional 72 million users of PowerSchool (62 million students, 10 million educators) had their social security numbers, medical records, and disciplinary information stolen[4].

These laws are constitutionally fragile with successful or partially successful challenges in Tennessee, Utah, Arkansas, and Texas. These laws often simply push minors to use offshore sites, VPNs, or to using less regulated social media platforms that may pose higher risks.

We urge the committee to oppose SF 4696.

John Boehler
Policy Counsel, ACLU-MN

[1] https://firewalltimes.com/twitter-data-breach-timeline/
[2] https://www.businessinsider.com/stolen-data-of-533-million-facebook-users-leaked-online-2021-4
[3] https://www.fastcompany.com/90399734/the-phone-numbers-of-419-million-facebook-accounts-have-been-leaked
[4] https://www.powerschool.com/security/sis-incident/notice-of-united-states-data-breach/