



April 7, 2026

The Honorable Victoria Gu, Chairwoman
Senate Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: S.2968, An Act Relating to Commercial Law – General Regulatory Provisions – Rhode Island Social Media Regulation Act

Dear Chairwoman Gu:

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition are writing in opposition to Senate Bill 2968, the Rhode Island Social Media Regulation Act. While we understand and share the concern for young people's safety online, this legislation would cause real harm to Rhode Island families and small businesses — without delivering the meaningful protections its sponsors intend.

S2968 would prohibit minors from holding accounts on social media platforms entirely, removing parents from the equation altogether. This is not a parental empowerment bill — it is a government mandate that substitutes legislators' judgment for that of families. Parents across Rhode Island are not asking the state to make these decisions for them. They are asking for better tools to make informed decisions themselves.

Blanket bans also have serious unintended consequences for the young people most in need of protection. For LGBTQ+ teens in unsupportive households, students in rural or isolated communities, and young people navigating mental health challenges, social media provides access to resources, peer support, and community that they cannot find anywhere else. Cutting off that access does not make those teens safer — it leaves them more isolated.

Australia enacted a similar under-16 social media ban in 2024. Researchers and advocates have since raised serious concerns that the law isolates vulnerable youth while doing little to address the actual drivers of poor youth mental health. Rhode Island should not follow that path.

Our member businesses — from retailers and restaurants to service providers and contractors — rely on social media platforms to reach customers affordably. The algorithmic systems that connect small businesses to interested buyers are the same systems that make social media valuable for consumers. Legislation that threatens the viability of these platforms, or creates a Rhode Island-specific regulatory

The Rhode Island Business Coalition represents 50 industries and 6,280 businesses that employ 231,200 people throughout Rhode Island.

environment that drives up operating costs, directly harms the small businesses that are the backbone of our state's economy.

Rhode Island families deserve real tools, not a blunt ban that falls hardest on the most vulnerable kids in our state.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and are happy to provide additional information at your request.

Sincerely,

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Rhode Island Staffing Association

TechNet

cc. Senate Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies Committee members