

[TO BE INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE]

**A
BILL**

to provide for Social Media (Age-Restricted Users)

WHEREAS it is expedient to provide for the Social Media (Age- Restricted Users) and to protect under-age people of Pakistan from the harms of social media by regulating the access for persons under the age of sixteen;

AND WHEREAS to reduce the risks of under-age people of cyberbullying, harmful content, and online exploitation. And to provide for young users' privacy, safeguard commercial exploitation and data breaches;

It is hereby enacted as follows:-

1. Short title, extent and commencement. - (1) This Act may be called the Social Media (Age-Restricted Users) Act, 2025.

(2) It shall extend to the whole of Pakistan.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions. - In this act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context, -

(i) **"Account-Holder"** means in relation to social media platform is the person who is registered as a user of the platform and include a person who has established a profile with the platform;

(ii) **"Age-restricted Social Media Platform"** means a social media platform designated in by the rules as an age restricted social media platform which includes but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, X, Whats app, Bigo live, Snap Chat, YouTube and Threads;

(iii) **"Age-Restricted user"** means a person who is under the age of sixteen;

(iv) **"Authority"** means the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority established under the Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-organization) Act, 1996 (XVII of 1996);

(v) **"Provider"** means the provider of age restricted social media platform; and

(vi) **"Social Media Platform"** means the digital platform that is used primarily to enable online social interactions between two or more end-users, allow the end-users to link to or interact to some or all of the end-users and post material on the platform;

3. Provider shall Prevent Age-Restricted Users from having accounts.- A provider of age-restricted Social Media platform shall prevent an age restricted user from being an-account holder with the age restricted Social media platform by taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters to be provided in the rules including but not limited to,-

- (i) the privacy of age restricted users; and
- (ii) the reliability of method used for a person to assure the provider that they are not the age restricted user.

4. Pecuniary Penalty.- If any provider of the age restricted social media platform allows an age restricted user, except a provider falling within the purview of section 5, of this Act shall be liable to fine not less than fifty thousand rupees and not more than five million rupees.

5. Punishment for facilitating age-restricted user to access age- restricted social media platforms. - Whoever facilitates any age restricted user in corroborating the production or usage of evidence through which age restricted social media account can be made, shall be punishable with simple imprisonment which may extend to six months and fine which shall not be less than fifty thousand rupees and more than five million rupees.

6. Failure to prevent age-restricted user from accessing age- restricted social media platforms.- There shall be no liability on the provider of age restricted social media platform, if a provider prove that their failure to prevent an age-restricted user from accessing their age- restricted social media platform was due to reasonable reliance on information and evidence provided by an age-restricted user.

7. Blockage of existing age restricted accounts.- The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority shall block all the existing age restricted social media accounts and shall take reasonable steps that no age restricted user get an account of the age restricted social media platform.

8. Power to make rules. - The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority shall make rules to carry out the purpose of this Act.

9. Removal of difficulties. - (1) If any question arises as to the interpretation of any of the provisions of the Act, it shall be placed before the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority whose decision thereon shall be final.

(2) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to any of the provisions of this Act, the Authority may make such order not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as may appear to Authority to be necessary for removing the difficulty.

(3) Where this Act makes any provision for anything to be done but no provision or no sufficient provision has been made as respects the authority by whom, or the time at which, or the manner in which, it shall be done, then it shall be done by such authority, at such time, or in such manner as the Authority may direct.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

There are signs that social media use can have a negative impact on young people. The Bill mandates that social media platforms implement strict age verification measures to prevent under-sixteen people from creating accounts. It introduces regulatory oversight to ensure compliance and penalize non-compliant platforms. Additionally, it promotes digital literacy and public awareness programs to educate parents and children on safe online behaviour. This approach is essential given the increasing negative impacts of social media on young users. Aligning with international efforts, including Australia's and New Zealand's recent policy shift, the Bill provides a proactive, enforceable solution to safeguard children while fostering a safer digital environment.

2. This Bill has been developed to achieve the aforesaid objectives.

SENATOR SYED MASROOR AHSAN
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