

SOCIAL MEDIA LITIGATION

Protecting the Youth from the Harmful Impact of Social Media

Across the United States, a growing mental health crisis is impacting children, adolescents, and teenagers at unprecedented levels. Increasing research links social media usage to mental health struggles, with concerning statistics on how deeply embedded social media is in young lives. Both, schools and parents are facing an uphill battle, as social media addiction drives mental health and behavioral issues, leaving teachers, counselors, and school programs stretched thin.

PRACTICE TEAM

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The Social Media and Youth Mental Health Crisis

In May 2023, the United States Surgeon General issued an Advisory that urges immediate action from policymakers, tech companies, and researchers to address the impact of social media on young users. Findings from this Advisory include:

- **Prevalence:** Up to 95% of adolescents use at least one social media platform, with over 33% on these platforms “almost constantly.”
- **Mental Health Risks:** Adolescents who spend over 3 hours daily on social media face double the risk of depression and anxiety symptoms.
- **Design Concerns:** Social media platforms are engineered to maximize engagement, often creating compulsive use patterns that disrupt sleep, self-esteem, and mental health. Studies among 14-year-olds indicate a strong association between excessive social media use and poor mental health, especially in girls.

Big Tech's Role: Prioritizing Profits Over Youth Well-being

Evidence, including whistleblower testimony, shows that some social media companies knowingly employ tactics to maximize user addiction. Utilizing artificial intelligence and complex algorithms, platforms are designed to captivate young users with a constant flow of provocative content, encouraging prolonged use and exploiting psychological vulnerabilities. As a result, adolescents are frequently exposed to harmful material, including hate speech, misinformation, self-harm, and exploitative content. Despite the clear link to youth mental health issues, Big Tech companies such as Meta, TikTok, Snap, and YouTube continue to prioritize profits over safety.



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Our Firm's Commitment to Justice

School districts nationwide are fighting back, seeking reimbursement from these companies for the costs of managing social media-driven mental health issues among students. The Singleton Schreiber team is among the law firms actively pursuing lawsuits on behalf of school districts and public entities. These lawsuits, consolidated in both California state and federal courts, include claims of:

- **Public Nuisance**
- **Unfair Business Practices**
- **Negligence and Gross Negligence**
- **Unfair Competition and Violation of Conspiracy Laws**

These lawsuits aim to recover damages for increased counseling and mental health staffing costs borne by school districts and to ensure that social media companies are held accountable.

Advocating for Lasting Change

With more than 40 State Attorneys General joining these efforts, legal pressure on social media companies is mounting. These cases seek not only financial compensation but also injunctions to prevent further harm, building a foundation for change in how social media companies operate.

As President Biden stated in the 2022 State of the Union address, "we must hold social media platforms accountable for the national experiment they're conducting on our children for profit." Singleton Schreiber is committed to protecting communities from this negligence and standing up for the mental health of our youth.

Explore How We Can Help

If your school district or community has been impacted by social media-related mental health issues, reach out to us to discuss potential legal solutions. Together, we can work toward a safer future for our children.

