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SENATE BILL NO. 359

Offered January 10, 2024

Prefiled January 9, 2024

A BILL to amend and reenact § 59.1-575 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 59.1-577.1, relating to Consumer Data Protection Act; social media platforms; addictive feed.

Patrons—VanValkenburg, Aird, Subramanyam and Suetterlein

Referred to Committee on Communications, Technology and Innovation

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 59.1-575 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 59.1-577.1 as follows:

§ 59.1-575. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Addictive feed" means a website, online service, or online or mobile application, or a portion thereof, in which multiple pieces of media generated or shared by users of a website, online service, or online or mobile application, either concurrently or sequentially, are recommended, selected, or prioritized for display to a user based, in whole or in part, on information associated with the user or the user's device, unless any of the following conditions are met, alone or in combination with one another:

1. The information is not persistently associated with the user or user's device and does not concern the user's previous interactions with media generated or shared by others;

2. The information is user-selected privacy or accessibility settings, technical information concerning the user's device, or device communications or signals concerning whether the user is a minor;

3. The user expressly and unambiguously requested the specific media or media by the author, creator, or poster of the media, provided that the media is not recommended, selected, or prioritized for display based, in whole or in part, on other information associated with the user or the user's device that is not otherwise permissible under this definition;

4. The media are direct, private communications; or

5. The media recommended, selected, or prioritized for display is exclusively the next media in a preexisting sequence from the same author, creator, poster, or source.

"Addictive social media platform" means a website, online service, or online or mobile application that offers or provides users an addictive feed that is not incidental to the provision of such website, online service, or online or mobile application.

"Affiliate" means a legal entity that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with another legal entity or shares common branding with another legal entity. For the purposes of this definition, "control" or "controlled" means (i) ownership of, or the power to vote, more than 50 percent of the outstanding shares of any class of voting security of a company; (ii) control in any manner over the election of a majority of the directors or of individuals exercising similar functions; or (iii) the power to exercise controlling influence over the management of a company.

"Authenticate" means verifying through reasonable means that the consumer, entitled to exercise his consumer rights in § 59.1-577, is the same consumer exercising such consumer rights with respect to the personal data at issue.

"Biometric data" means data generated by automatic measurements of an individual's biological characteristics, such as a fingerprint, voiceprint, eye retinas, irises, or other unique biological patterns or characteristics that is used to identify a specific individual. "Biometric data" does not include a physical or digital photograph, a video or audio recording or data generated therefrom, or information collected, used, or stored for health care treatment, payment, or operations under HIPAA.

"Business associate" means the same meaning as the term established by HIPAA.

"Child" or "minor" means any natural person younger than 18 years of age.

"Consent" means a clear affirmative act signifying a consumer's freely given, specific, informed, and unambiguous agreement to process personal data relating to the consumer. Consent may include a written statement, including a statement written by electronic means, or any other unambiguous affirmative action.

"Consumer" means a natural person who is a resident of the Commonwealth acting only in an individual or household context. It does not include a natural person acting in a commercial or employment context.

"Controller" means the natural or legal person that, alone or jointly with others, determines the purpose and means of processing personal data.

"Covered entity" means the same as the term is established by HIPAA.

59 "Decisions that produce legal or similarly significant effects concerning a consumer" means a decision
60 made by the controller that results in the provision or denial by the controller of financial and lending
61 services, housing, insurance, education enrollment, criminal justice, employment opportunities, health care
62 services, or access to basic necessities, such as food and water.

63 "De-identified data" means data that cannot reasonably be linked to an identified or identifiable natural
64 person, or a device linked to such person. A controller that possesses "de-identified data" shall comply with
65 the requirements of subsection A of § 59.1-581.

66 "Health record" means the same as that term is defined in § 32.1-127.1:03.

67 "Health care provider" means the same as that term is defined in § 32.1-276.3.

68 "HIPAA" means the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. §
69 1320d et seq.).

70 "Identified or identifiable natural person" means a person who can be readily identified, directly or
71 indirectly.

72 "Institution of higher education" means a public institution and private institution of higher education, as
73 those terms are defined in § 23.1-100.

74 "Nonprofit organization" means any corporation organized under the Virginia Nonstock Corporation Act
75 (§ 13.1-801 et seq.) or any organization exempt from taxation under § 501(c)(3), 501(c)(6), or 501(c)(12) of
76 the Internal Revenue Code, any political organization, any organization exempt from taxation under §
77 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that is identified in § 52-41, and any subsidiary or affiliate of entities
78 organized pursuant to Chapter 9.1 (§ 56-231.15 et seq.) of Title 56.

79 "*Operator*" means any person that operates or provides a website, online service, or online or mobile
80 application.

81 "*Parent*" means a parent or legal guardian of a child.

82 "Personal data" means any information that is linked or reasonably linkable to an identified or identifiable
83 natural person. "Personal data" does not include de-identified data or publicly available information.

84 "Political organization" means a party, committee, association, fund, or other organization, whether or not
85 incorporated, organized and operated primarily for the purpose of influencing or attempting to influence the
86 selection, nomination, election, or appointment of any individual to any federal, state, or local public office or
87 office in a political organization or the election of a presidential/vice-presidential elector, whether or not such
88 individual or elector is selected, nominated, elected, or appointed.

89 "Precise geolocation data" means information derived from technology, including but not limited to global
90 positioning system level latitude and longitude coordinates or other mechanisms, that directly identifies the
91 specific location of a natural person with precision and accuracy within a radius of 1,750 feet. "Precise
92 geolocation data" does not include the content of communications or any data generated by or connected to
93 advanced utility metering infrastructure systems or equipment for use by a utility.

94 "Process" or "processing" means any operation or set of operations performed, whether by manual or
95 automated means, on personal data or on sets of personal data, such as the collection, use, storage, disclosure,
96 analysis, deletion, or modification of personal data.

97 "Processor" means a natural or legal entity that processes personal data on behalf of a controller.

98 "Profiling" means any form of automated processing performed on personal data to evaluate, analyze, or
99 predict personal aspects related to an identified or identifiable natural person's economic situation, health,
100 personal preferences, interests, reliability, behavior, location, or movements.

101 "Protected health information" means the same as the term is established by HIPAA.

102 "Pseudonymous data" means personal data that cannot be attributed to a specific natural person without
103 the use of additional information, provided that such additional information is kept separately and is subject
104 to appropriate technical and organizational measures to ensure that the personal data is not attributed to an
105 identified or identifiable natural person.

106 "Publicly available information" means information that is lawfully made available through federal, state,
107 or local government records, or information that a business has a reasonable basis to believe is lawfully made
108 available to the general public through widely distributed media, by the consumer, or by a person to whom
109 the consumer has disclosed the information, unless the consumer has restricted the information to a specific
110 audience.

111 "Sale of personal data" means the exchange of personal data for monetary consideration by the controller
112 to a third party. "Sale of personal data" does not include:

113 1. The disclosure of personal data to a processor that processes the personal data on behalf of the
114 controller;

115 2. The disclosure of personal data to a third party for purposes of providing a product or service requested
116 by the consumer;

117 3. The disclosure or transfer of personal data to an affiliate of the controller;

118 4. The disclosure of information that the consumer (i) intentionally made available to the general public
119 via a channel of mass media and (ii) did not restrict to a specific audience; or

120 5. The disclosure or transfer of personal data to a third party as an asset that is part of a merger,

121 acquisition, bankruptcy, or other transaction in which the third party assumes control of all or part of the
122 controller's assets.

123 "Sensitive data" means a category of personal data that includes:

- 124 1. Personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, religious beliefs, mental or physical health diagnosis,
125 sexual orientation, or citizenship or immigration status;
- 126 2. The processing of genetic or biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person;
- 127 3. The personal data collected from a known child; or
- 128 4. Precise geolocation data.

129 "*Social media platform*" means a website, online service, or online or mobile application that (i) permits
130 a person to become a registered user, establish an account, or create a profile for the purpose of allowing
131 users to create, share, or view user-generated content through the account holder's registration, account, or
132 profile; (ii) enables an account holder to generate content that other users of the medium can view; and (iii)
133 primarily serves as a medium for users to interact with content generated by other users of the medium.

134 "State agency" means the same as that term is defined in § 2.2-307.

135 "Targeted advertising" means displaying advertisements to a consumer where the advertisement is
136 selected based on personal data obtained from that consumer's activities over time and across nonaffiliated
137 websites or online applications to predict such consumer's preferences or interests. "Targeted advertising"
138 does not include:

- 139 1. Advertisements based on activities within a controller's own websites or online applications;
- 140 2. Advertisements based on the context of a consumer's current search query, visit to a website, or online
141 application;
- 142 3. Advertisements directed to a consumer in response to the consumer's request for information or
143 feedback; or
- 144 4. Processing personal data processed solely for measuring or reporting advertising performance, reach, or
145 frequency.

146 "Third party" means a natural or legal person, public authority, agency, or body other than the consumer,
147 controller, processor, or an affiliate of the processor or the controller.

148 "*User*" means a person not acting as an agent of an operator.

149 **§ 59.1-577.1. Social media platforms; responsibilities and prohibitions related to children.**

150 A. No person that operates a social media platform shall provide an addictive feed to a user unless such
151 operator (i) uses commercially reasonable methods to determine that the user is not a minor or (ii) obtains
152 verifiable parental consent to provide an addictive feed to the minor user. Information collected for the
153 purpose of determining a user's age shall not be used for any purpose other than age determination. For the
154 purposes of this section, the operator of an addictive social medial platform shall treat a user as a minor if
155 the user's device communicates or signals that the user is or shall be treated as a minor, including through a
156 browser plug-in or privacy setting, device setting, or other mechanism.

157 B. Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring the operator of an addictive social media
158 platform to give a parent who grants verifiable parental consent any additional or special access to or
159 control over the data or accounts of his child.

160 C. No operator of an addictive social media platform shall withhold, degrade, lower the quality of, or
161 increase the price of any product, service, or feature to a user due to the operator not being permitted to
162 provide an addictive feed to such user under subsection A.

163 D. Whenever it appears to the Attorney General, either upon complaint or otherwise, that any person,
164 within or outside the Commonwealth, has engaged in or is about to engage in any of the acts or practices
165 stated to be unlawful in this section, the Attorney General may bring an action to enjoin any violation of this
166 section in accordance with the procedures established in § 59.1-584.