

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9948

To direct the President to establish an interagency task force to review, and provide recommendations on, the impact of addictive design features on youth mental health, to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish grant programs to support the activities of the task force, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 27, 2026

Ms. BALINT (for herself, Mr. DELUZIO, Mr. SUOZZI, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Education and Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the President to establish an interagency task force to review, and provide recommendations on, the impact of addictive design features on youth mental health, to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish grant programs to support the activities of the task force, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Addictive Design Act
3 of 2026”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) According to Common Sense Media, in
7 2025, 12 percent of teenagers said they used an AI
8 chatbot for mental health support.

9 (2) AI chatbots are often trained for a general
10 purpose and on a wide swath of data, therefore AI
11 chatbots are not specifically designed to support a
12 youth dealing with a mental health crisis.

13 (3) In fact, many AI chatbots are intentionally
14 designed with addictive design features that aim to
15 develop an emotional relationship with the user and
16 keep users on the application.

17 (4) Multiple families have filed wrongful death
18 lawsuits alleging that conversations with an AI
19 chatbot played a role in their child’s suicide.

20 (5) According to Public Citizen, in 2025 and
21 2026, 11 States enacted laws seeking to address the
22 effects of AI chatbots on youth mental health and
23 well-being.

24 (6) The evidence presented to Congress indi-
25 cates that AI chatbots pose a considerable risk to
26 the mental health and emotional well-being of youth.

1 (7) Commercial freedoms of speech embodied in
2 the First Amendment and legitimate public safety
3 interests must be balanced in a way that mitigates
4 harm while protecting legitimate speech.

5 (8) Restricting access by youth to addictive de-
6 sign features is the only effective means of address-
7 ing, with respect to youth, the mental well-being and
8 public safety risks stemming from AI chatbots.

9 (9) Protecting youth from the mental health
10 and public safety risks associated with addictive de-
11 sign features in AI chatbots is a compelling govern-
12 ment interest.

13 **SEC. 3. INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON IMPACT OF AI**
14 **CHATBOTS ON YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the
16 date of enactment of this Act, the President shall establish
17 an interagency task force, to be known as the “Task Force
18 Addressing the Impact of Addictive Design Features on
19 Youth Mental Health” (in this section referred to as the
20 “Task Force”), to review research and make recommenda-
21 tions on the impact of the use of AI chatbots on youth
22 mental health for the purpose of reducing the impact and
23 use of addictive design features.

24 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall be
2 composed of—

3 (A) the Secretary of Health and Human
4 Services (or a delegate of the Secretary);

5 (B) the Director of the National Institute
6 of Standards and Technology (or a delegate of
7 the Director);

8 (C) the Chairman of the Federal Trade
9 Commission (or a delegate of the Chairman);

10 (D) the Assistant Secretary for Health;

11 (E) the Director of the Center for Mental
12 Health Services in the Substance Abuse and
13 Mental Health Services Administration;

14 (F) the Chief Technology Officer of the
15 Office of Technology in the Federal Trade
16 Commission;

17 (G) 1 academic researcher with experience
18 researching the impacts of AI chatbots on
19 youth mental health;

20 (H) 1 academic researcher with experience
21 researching the design of AI chatbots;

22 (I) 2 psychologists or clinical social work-
23 ers;

24 (J) 1 psychiatrist;

25 (K) 1 mental health professional; and

1 (L) the head of any such other Executive
2 agency (as defined in section 105 of title 5,
3 United States Code), or a representative of an
4 entity, as determined appropriate by the Presi-
5 dent.

6 (2) COMMISSIONER.—The Task Force shall be
7 headed by a commissioner, who shall be elected
8 through voice vote by the members of the Task
9 Force.

10 (3) MEMBER REQUIREMENTS.—A member of
11 the Task Force—

12 (A) with respect to a member that is an
13 academic researcher, shall be employed by an
14 institution of higher education;

15 (B) with respect to a member that is a
16 psychologist, clinical social worker, or psychia-
17 trist, shall—

18 (i) be licensed in a State; and

19 (ii) have at least 5 years of clinical ex-
20 perience—

21 (I) in child and adolescent devel-
22 opment; and

23 (II) working with youth;

24 (C) with respect to a member that is a
25 mental health professional, shall—

- 1 (i) be licensed in a State; and
2 (ii) specialize in treating addiction;
3 and

4 (D) with respect to a member listed in sub-
5 paragraphs (G) through (K) of paragraph (1),
6 may not be a political appointee.

7 (4) TERMS.—Each member shall serve for the
8 duration of the Task Force.

9 (5) VACANCY.—In the case of a vacancy on the
10 Task Force, such vacancy shall be filled not later
11 than 30 days after arising and in the manner in
12 which the original appointment was made.

13 (6) MEETINGS.—The Task Force shall meet
14 annually at the call of the chair.

15 (c) DUTIES.—The Task Force shall—

16 (1) review any research, including research
17 under section 4(a), that is conducted—

18 (A) prior to the date on which the Task
19 Force begins making recommendations under
20 paragraph (2); and

21 (B) on the impact of the use of AI
22 chatbots on youth mental health; and

23 (2) based on the findings of the review carried
24 out under paragraph (1), make recommendations
25 with respect to—

1 (A) developing and implementing a method
2 to minimize any mental health risk, including
3 unhealthy emotional attachment, associated
4 with the use of an AI chatbot by youth;

5 (B) developing and implementing a method
6 for covered entities to identify any warning sign
7 of a mental health risk, including unhealthy
8 emotional attachment and addiction to use of
9 an AI chatbot, in youth who use an AI chatbot;

10 (C) identifying best practices for covered
11 entities to provide information on mental health
12 services provided by a licensed medical health
13 professional, including a psychologist,
14 pyschiasrst, therapist, social worker, counselor,
15 or clinician, to such youth who exhibit such
16 warning signs;

17 (D) identifying any mental health risk as-
18 sociated with the use of an AI chatbot, specifi-
19 cally an AI chatbot that includes an addictive
20 design feature, by youth; and

21 (E) identifying best practices for a covered
22 entity to identify and respond to any mental
23 health outcome related to such use.

24 (d) PUBLICATION OF CERTAIN RECOMMENDA-
25 TIONS.—For purposes of informing covered entities, the

1 Task Force shall make available to the public on the
2 websites of the Department of Health and Human Serv-
3 ices and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
4 Administration the recommendations made under sub-
5 section (c)(2).

6 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
7 on which all research projects conducted under section
8 4(a) are complete, the Commissioner of the Task Force
9 shall submit to each appropriate congressional committee
10 a report on the activities of the Task Force carried out
11 under this section.

12 (f) SUNSET CLAUSE.—The Task Force shall termi-
13 nate 60 days after the Task Force submits the report
14 under subsection (e).

15 **SEC. 4. RESEARCH AND OUTREACH GRANTS.**

16 (a) RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and
18 Human Services (in this section referred to as the
19 Secretary) shall make grants to institutions of high-
20 er education to conduct research projects on the im-
21 pact of the use of AI chatbots on youth mental
22 health, including to inform the recommendations de-
23 scribed in section 3(c)(2).

24 (2) CONDITION OF RECEIVING GRANT.—As a
25 condition of receiving a grant under this subsection,

1 an institution of higher education shall demonstrate
2 an ability to safely store any data received when con-
3 ducting research.

4 (3) REQUEST FOR DATA AND INFORMATION.—

5 An institution of higher education that receives any
6 funds through a grant under this subsection may re-
7 quest from a covered entity any data and informa-
8 tion that is necessary and relevant to the research
9 to be conducted using such funds.

10 (b) OUTREACH GRANT PROGRAM.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall make
12 grants to eligible entities to provide outreach to par-
13 ents, legal guardians, and covered teachers in the
14 form of training or any such other activity deter-
15 mined appropriate by the Secretary.

16 (2) CONTENT OF OUTREACH.—An eligible enti-
17 ty that receives a grant under this subsection shall
18 include in any outreach—

19 (A) a method for identifying, and respond-
20 ing to, any warning sign of a mental health
21 risk, including unhealthy emotional attachment
22 and addiction to use of an AI chatbot, in youth
23 who use an AI chatbot;

24 (B) any mental health risk associated with
25 the use of an AI chatbot, specifically an AI

1 chatbot that includes an addictive design fea-
2 ture, by youth; and

3 (C) a method for discussing any such
4 warning sign with youth.

5 (3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—The term
6 “eligible entity” means an entity that is—

7 (A) an organization described in section
8 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
9 and exempt from tax under section 501(a) of
10 such Code; or

11 (B) a community-based organization with
12 experience working with parents and covered
13 teachers.

14 (c) REPORTS.—The Secretary shall submit to each
15 appropriate congressional committee a report con-
16 taining—

17 (1) information on any institution of higher
18 education or eligible entity that receives a grant
19 under subsection (a) or (b), respectively; and

20 (2) the amount of each such grant.

21 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
22 authorized to be appropriated for fiscal years 2027
23 through 2032—

24 (1) \$3,000,000 to carry out subsection (a); and

25 (2) \$5,000,000 to carry out subsection (b).

1 **SEC. 5. REQUIRED PROVISION OF ACCESS TO DATA.**

2 (a) ACCESS TO DATA.—For purposes of an institute
3 of higher education conducting a research project under
4 section 4(a), a covered entity shall provide access to any
5 data and information requested by such institution under
6 such section.

7 (b) PRIVACY.—In providing access to data and infor-
8 mation under subsection (a), a covered entity shall remove
9 any identifiable information from such data and informa-
10 tion.

11 (c) CIVIL PENALTY.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall
13 assess a civil penalty against a covered entity in an
14 amount of not more than \$10,000,000 for each vio-
15 lation of subsection (a).

16 (2) ACTIVITY CONSTITUTING VIOLATION.—For
17 purposes of paragraph (1), failure to comply under
18 subsection (a) with any request with respect to a
19 single research project shall be considered as one
20 violation.

21 (d) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—The Attorney General
22 may bring an action in an appropriate United States dis-
23 trict court against a covered entity that violates subsection
24 (a) for such relief as may be appropriate, including injunc-
25 tive relief.

1 **SEC. 6. PROHIBITION ON ADDICTIVE DESIGN FEATURES.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—A covered entity may not make
3 available to youth an AI chatbot with addictive design fea-
4 tures.

5 (b) REQUIREMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTED.—If a
6 covered entity, for purposes of ensuring compliance with
7 paragraph (1), deploys appropriate age verification tech-
8 nology to determine whether a user of an AI chatbot made
9 available by such entity is a youth, such entity shall—

10 (1) limit any data collected through such de-
11 ployment to only that data that is strictly necessary
12 to determine the age of such user; and

13 (2) delete any such data not later than 24
14 hours after reviewing such data.

15 (c) CIVIL PENALTY.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall
17 assess a civil penalty against a covered entity in an
18 amount of \$5,000 for each violation of subsection
19 (a) or (b).

20 (2) ACTIVITY CONSTITUTING VIOLATION.—For
21 purposes of paragraph (1), failure to comply under
22 subsection (a) or (b) with respect to the same event
23 or transaction, or a related series of events or trans-
24 actions, shall be considered as one violation.

25 (d) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—The Attorney General
26 may bring an action in an appropriate United States dis-

1 triet court against a covered entity that violates subsection
2 (a) or (b) for such relief as may be appropriate, including
3 injunctive relief.

4 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

5 In this Act:

6 (1) **ADDICTIVE DESIGN FEATURES.**—The term
7 “addictive design feature” means an element of an
8 AI chatbot that is designed for the purpose of mim-
9 icking human behavior, building or engaging in an
10 emotional relationship with the user, or ensuring the
11 user continues to use the AI chatbot, including—

12 (A) showing typing bubbles;

13 (B) providing avatars;

14 (C) storing and using personal information
15 from previous conversations;

16 (D) requiring additional engagement or
17 pay to continue a conversation;

18 (E) maintaining a conversation for longer
19 than 2 hours; or

20 (F) impersonating a real person, living or
21 dead.

22 (2) **AI CHATBOT.**—The term “AI chatbot”
23 means a generative artificial intelligence system that
24 engages in an interactive conversation with a user
25 that—

1 (A) is carried out through a text, audio, or
2 visual medium; and

3 (B) is not predetermined or scripted.

4 (3) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COM-
5 MITTEE.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
6 mittee” means—

7 (A) the Committee on Energy and Com-
8 merce of the House of Representatives;

9 (B) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
10 House of Representatives;

11 (C) the Committee on Commerce, Science,
12 and Transportation of the Senate; or

13 (D) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
14 Senate.

15 (4) COVERED TEACHER.—The term “covered
16 teacher” means a teacher employed by an elemen-
17 tary, middle, or high school.

18 (5) COVERED ENTITY.—The term “covered en-
19 tity” means a person who owns, operates, or other-
20 wise makes available an AI chatbot to youth.

21 (6) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
22 term “institution of higher education” has the
23 meaning given such term in section 102 of the High-
24 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

1 (7) STATE.—The term “State” means a State,
2 the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of
3 Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Trust
4 Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Virgin Islands,
5 the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Is-
6 lands, or any other territory of the United States.

7 (8) YOUTH.—The term “youth” means an indi-
8 vidual who—

9 (A) is under the age of 18; and

10 (B) resides in the United States.

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