

Federal Appeals Court Allows Thousands of Social Media Addiction Lawsuits to Move Forward

A Ninth Circuit ruling lets thousands of social media addiction lawsuits move forward as families allege addictive platform design harmed young users.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Thousands of lawsuits alleging that major social media companies intentionally designed their platforms to addict young users will continue following a significant ruling today from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.



Thousands of families are alleging that the platforms keeping young users engaged may have contributed to serious harm—and now those claims will be tested in court.

According to Reuters' August 10 reporting, the Ninth Circuit rejected an effort by Meta Platforms, Google, TikTok and other social media companies to immediately overturn lower-court rulings requiring them to face more than 3,000 federal lawsuits involving allegations of social media addiction and resulting harm to children and young adults.

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Candice Lapham

The lawsuits, centralized in federal court in California, have been brought by individuals, states, municipalities and school districts. Plaintiffs allege that social media companies intentionally incorporated product features designed to maximize engagement and compulsive use, contributing to depression, anxiety, body-image issues and other serious harms among young users.

The companies argued, among other things, that Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act provided protection that permitted an immediate appeal. The Ninth Circuit concluded that Section 230 provides a defense to liability rather than

immunity from being sued and determined that the companies' appeal was premature.

The decision does not resolve the ultimate merits of the underlying lawsuits. It does, however, allow the federal litigation to continue.

"This decision does not determine whether any individual claim will ultimately succeed, but it is an important development because these cases will continue and the allegations concerning addictive platform design will be tested in court," said Candice K. Lapham, Lead Litigation Attorney at K Altman Law. "For families who have watched a child struggle with compulsive social media use followed by significant emotional, psychological or physical consequences, the legal landscape is continuing to develop. Those families should understand that their



Candice Lapham, NIL/Litigation Attorney at K Altman Law

circumstances may warrant evaluation rather than assuming there is nothing they can do."

Reuters also reports that the Ninth Circuit denied Meta's effort to delay a separate trial brought by 29 state attorneys general alleging, among other things, that Meta designed its platforms to keep young users engaged, illegally collected and used children's data, and misled consumers concerning platform safety.

What Families Should Consider Now:

For parents who believe a child or young adult experienced serious harm associated with compulsive use of Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat,

YouTube or other social media platforms, preserving evidence can be important.

- Social media account names and platforms used;
- Screen-time and app-usage records;
- Screenshots, messages, posts and other platform communications;
- Records showing changes in social media usage over time;
- School records reflecting behavioral, attendance or academic changes;
- Counseling, treatment or medical records;
- Documentation concerning depression, anxiety, eating disorders, body-image concerns, self-harm or other significant consequences; and

- A timeline connecting platform usage with observable changes in the child's health or behavior.

Families should avoid deleting accounts, communications or device information that may later become relevant.

K Altman Law Reviewing Potential Social Media Addiction Claims Nationwide

K Altman Law is currently evaluating potential Social Media Addiction cases involving children and young adults who experienced serious harm allegedly associated with compulsive social media use and addictive platform design.

Not every instance of heavy social media use creates a viable legal claim. Each matter requires an individualized assessment of platform usage, age, documented injuries, medical and educational history, causation and other case-specific factors.

Families who believe their child may have been seriously harmed can contact K Altman Law to determine whether their circumstances warrant further legal evaluation. Learn more at www.kaltmanlaw.com.

About K Altman Law

K Altman Law is a national law firm representing students, families and individuals in complex litigation, civil rights, education and related matters. The firm represents clients nationwide and is committed to holding institutions and corporations accountable when their conduct causes significant harm.

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