



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 6410

January Session, 2023



AN ACT ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP CONCERNING SAFE ONLINE PRACTICES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a safe online
2 practices working group to study and make recommendations related
3 to addressing harassing, abusive or threatening behavior on online
4 social media platforms. Such study and recommendations shall include,
5 but need not be limited to, (1) assessing the short-term and long-term
6 effects of online harassing, abusive or threatening behaviors on elected
7 officials, public officials and residents of this state, (2) assessing what
8 state or municipal action is needed to address negative online behaviors
9 that balances a citizen's right to freedom of speech versus an individual's
10 right to be free from harassment, including, but not limited to, potential
11 changes in state law concerning additional penalties for or enforcement
12 of online harassment, and (3) establishing guidelines for the reporting
13 of online harassment of elected state and municipal officials, judges and
14 family support magistrates that find a balance between making such
15 officials, judges and magistrates accessible to the people whom they
16 serve and protecting them from abusive, offensive or threatening online
17 harassment.

18 (b) The working group shall consist of the following members:

19 (1) Three appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,
20 one of whom has expertise in social media company standards and the
21 technical capabilities of such companies, one of whom is a professor at
22 an institution of higher education who has expertise in first amendment
23 rights and one of whom is a member of the House of Representatives;

24 (2) Three appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one
25 of whom is a sworn member of a municipal law enforcement agency,
26 one of whom is a sworn member of the State Capitol Police and one of
27 whom is a member of the Senate;

28 (3) Two appointed by the majority leader of the House of
29 Representatives, one of whom is a representative of an organization
30 protecting civil liberties and one of whom is a representative of an
31 organization representing municipalities;

32 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who is an
33 unpaid municipal official;

34 (5) Two appointed by the minority leader of the House of
35 Representatives, one of whom is a member of federal law enforcement
36 and one of whom is a member of the House of Representatives;

37 (6) Two appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom
38 is a psychologist with expertise in the human impact of hate speech and
39 harassing behaviors and one of whom is a member of the Senate;

40 (7) The executive director of the Freedom of Information
41 Commission, or a designee;

42 (8) The Chief State's Attorney, or a designee;

43 (9) The Chief Court Administrator, or a designee; and

44 (10) The Attorney General, or a designee.

45 (c) Any member of the working group appointed under subdivision
46 (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member

47 of the General Assembly.

48 (d) All initial appointments to the working group shall be made not
49 later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. If any
50 appointments under subdivisions (1) to (6), inclusive, of subsection (b)
51 of this section have not been made by the appointing authority thirty-
52 one days after the effective date of this section, the chairpersons of the
53 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
54 matters relating to government administration shall jointly fill any such
55 appointment. Any vacancy other than the initial appointment shall be
56 filled by the appointing authority.

57 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
58 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the working group
59 from among the members of the working group. Such chairpersons shall
60 schedule the first meeting of the working group, which shall be held not
61 later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

62 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
63 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to government
64 administration shall serve as administrative staff of the working group.

65 (g) The working group shall conduct at least one public hearing to
66 solicit testimony from the public.

67 (h) Not later than February 1, 2024, the working group shall submit a
68 report on the findings of the study and any recommendations to the
69 joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance
70 of matters relating to government administration and planning and
71 development, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the
72 general statutes, including, but not limited to, any recommended
73 changes in state law and guidelines developed pursuant to subsection
74 (a) of this section. The working group shall terminate on the date that it
75 submits such report or February 1, 2024, whichever is later.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Subsec. (a)(1) "abusive or threatening" was added for consistency; in Subsec. (a)(2), "consider" was changed to "balances" for clarity; and in Subsecs. (a) and (h), references were changed from "assessment" to "study" for clarity.

GAE *Joint Favorable Subst.*