

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2026

Legislative Document

No. 2162

H.P. 1451

House of Representatives, January 13, 2026

**An Act to Regulate and Prevent Children's Access to Artificial
Intelligence Chatbots with Human-like Features and Social
Artificial Intelligence Companions**

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Reference to the Committee on Judiciary suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach.

Cosponsored by Senator BAILEY of York and

Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, Speaker FECTION of Biddeford, FOLEY of Wells, MATHIESON of Kittery, MOONEN of Portland, SACHS of Freeport, Senator: PIERCE of Cumberland.

1 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

2 Sec. 1. 10 MRSA c. 247 is enacted to read:

3 CHAPTER 247

4 REGULATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CHATBOTS AND SOCIAL
5 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANIONS

6 §1500-PP. Definitions

7 As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms
8 have the following meanings.

9 **1. Artificial intelligence chatbot; chatbot.** "Artificial intelligence chatbot" or
10 "chatbot" means an artificial intelligence system with which users can interact by or
11 through a software application, web interface, computer program or other interface that
12 approximates or simulates human conversation and interaction through a text, audio or
13 visual medium.

14 **2. Deployer.** "Deployer" means a person that operates or distributes an artificial
15 intelligence chatbot, therapy chatbot or social artificial intelligence companion.

16 **3. Emergency situation.** "Emergency situation" means a situation in which a user
17 indicates to a chatbot that the user intends to harm the user or commit harm to another
18 person.

19 **4. Human-like feature.** "Human-like feature," with respect to an artificial intelligence
20 system, means:

21 A. Behavior that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the artificial
22 intelligence system is conveying that it has humanity, sentience, emotions or desires,
23 which:

24 (1) May include, but is not limited to, the artificial intelligence system:

25 (a) Stating or suggesting that it is human or sentient;

26 (b) Stating or suggesting that it has emotions; or

27 (c) Stating or suggesting that it has personal desires; and

28 (2) Does not include:

29 (a) The provision of a functional evaluation; or

30 (b) The use of generic social formalities;

31 B. An attempt by the artificial intelligence system to build or engage in an emotional
32 relationship with the user, which:

33 (1) Includes, but is not limited to:

34 (a) Expressing or inviting emotional attachment;

35 (b) Reminding, prompting or encouraging the user to return for emotional
36 support or companionship;

1 (c) Depicting nonverbal forms of emotional support;
2 (d) Behaving in a way that a reasonable user would consider excessive praise
3 designed to foster emotional attachment with or otherwise gain the favor of the
4 user; or
5 (e) Enabling or purporting to enable increased intimacy based on engagement
6 or payment by the user; and
7 (2) Does not include:
8 (a) Using generic words or phrases of encouragement that do not create an
9 ongoing emotional attachment; or
10 (b) Asking if a user needs further help or support in a neutral, nonemotional
11 context; or
12 C. Impersonation of a real individual, living or dead, by the artificial intelligence
13 system.
14 **5. Minor.** "Minor" means an individual who has not attained 18 years of age.
15 **6. Person.** "Person" means an individual, partnership, corporation, developer or state
16 or local government agency.
17 **7. Social artificial intelligence companion; social AI companion.** "Social artificial
18 intelligence companion" or "social AI companion" means an artificial intelligence system
19 that is specifically designed, marketed or optimized to form an ongoing social or emotional
20 attachment with a user, whether or not such a system also provides information, completes
21 tasks or assists with specific functions.
22 **8. Therapy chatbot.** "Therapy chatbot" means a chatbot modified or designed with
23 the primary purpose of providing mental health support, counseling or therapeutic
24 intervention through the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of mental health
25 conditions.
26 **9. User.** "User" means a person who interacts with an artificial intelligence system.
27 **§1500-QQ. Applicability**
28 This chapter applies to:
29 **1. Deployers; connection to State.** Deployers that conduct business in this State or
30 that operate or distribute products or services that are marketed or promoted to residents of
31 this State; and
32 **2. Users and minors; residence.** Users and minors who reside in this State.
33 **§1500-RR. Chatbots with human-like features and social AI companions not**
34 **accessible to minors**
35 The accessibility of artificial intelligence chatbots with human-like features and social
36 AI companions to minors in this State is governed as follows.
37 **1. Chatbots with human-like features; no minor access; age verification;**
38 **alternative versions.** A deployer shall ensure that any chatbot operated or distributed by
39 the deployer does not make human-like features available to minors to use, interact with,
40 purchase or converse with. The deployer shall implement reasonable age verification

1 systems to ensure that chatbots with human-like features are not accessible to minors. A
2 deployer may, if reasonable given the purpose of the chatbot, provide an alternative version
3 of the chatbot without human-like features available to minors and any user who has not
4 verified that user's age.

5 **2. Social artificial intelligence companions; no minor access; age verification.** A
6 deployer shall ensure that any artificial intelligence system, including a chatbot, operated
7 or distributed by the deployer that primarily functions as a social artificial intelligence
8 companion is not available to minors to use, interact with, purchase or converse with. The
9 deployer shall implement reasonable age verification systems to ensure that such chatbots
10 are not accessible to minors.

11 **3. Exemption for therapy chatbots.** Notwithstanding subsections 1 and 2, a deployer
12 may make available to a minor a therapy chatbot as long as all of the following
13 requirements are met:

14 A. The therapy chatbot provides a clear and conspicuous disclaimer at the beginning
15 of each individual interaction that it is artificial intelligence and not a licensed mental
16 health professional;

17 B. The therapy chatbot is not marketed or designated as a substitute for a licensed
18 mental health professional;

19 C. A licensed mental health professional, such as a licensed clinical psychologist,
20 assesses a minor's suitability, prescribes use of the therapy chatbot as part of a
21 comprehensive treatment plan and monitors its use and impact on the minor;

22 D. Developers of the therapy chatbot provide robust, independent, peer-reviewed
23 clinical trial data demonstrating the safety and efficacy of the therapy chatbot for
24 specific conditions and populations;

25 E. The therapy chatbot's functions, limitations and data privacy policies are transparent
26 to the licensed mental health professional under paragraph C and the user; and

27 F. The deployer has established clear lines of accountability to address any harm
28 caused by the therapy chatbot.

29 **§1500-SS. Additional protections; all users**

30 A deployer shall implement and maintain business practices in accordance with this
31 section for the protection of all users.

32 **1. Emergency situations; detection and response.** A deployer shall implement and
33 maintain reasonably effective systems to detect, promptly respond to, report and mitigate
34 emergency situations in a manner that prioritizes a user's safety and well-being over the
35 deployer's other interests.

36 **2. User information collection and storage.** A deployer shall collect and store only
37 information that does not conflict with a user's safety and well-being. A deployer may not
38 collect and store information except to fulfill a legitimate purpose of the deployer. A
39 deployer may collect and store information that is adequate to fulfill a legitimate purpose
40 of the deployer, but only to the extent that the information:

41 A. Is relevant to that legitimate purpose; and

42 B. Is the minimum amount of information necessary to fulfill that legitimate purpose.

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1. Civil action brought by Attorney General. The Attorney General may bring a civil action against a person that violates this chapter. Penalties may include:

- 2. Private right of action for minors.** A minor who uses a chatbot that does not comply with the terms of this chapter, or a parent or guardian acting on the minor's behalf, may bring a civil action independently, or as part of a class action, to:

- ## §1500-UU. Rules

SUMMARY

The bill places limitations on an operator and distributor's collection and storage of user information and requires an operator and distributor to implement and maintain systems to detect and respond to situations in which a user indicates that the user intends to harm the user or another person.

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