

366-00890-2026

CAUSE NO. _____

STATE OF TEXAS	§	IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF
	§	
<i>Plaintiff,</i>	§	COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS
v.	§	
	§	
SNAP, INC.	§	_____ JUDICIAL DISTRICT
	§	
<i>Defendants.</i>	§	JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
	§	
	§	PUBLIC REDACTED

PLAINTIFF’S ORIGINAL PETITION

Plaintiff, STATE OF TEXAS (“Plaintiff” or “the State”), acting by and through the Attorney General of Texas, Ken Paxton, brings this action against Defendant SNAP INC. (“Defendant” or “Snap”) for violating the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices—Consumer Protection Act (“DTPA”), TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. §§ 17.41 *et seq.* and the Securing Children Online through Parental Empowerment (“SCOPE”) Act, TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. §§ 509.001–.002, 509.051–.059, 509.101–.104, and 509.151–.152.

INTRODUCTION

1. Snap Inc. (“Snap”) operates the Snapchat social media platform, which is enormously popular among Texas teenagers and easily accessible to them online. Snap tells Texas parents and their children that mature content on its platform, including drugs, nudity, alcohol, and profanity, is “infrequent” and “mild.” Those representations are lies. The Snapchat app is rife with extremely mature content in all of those categories, which is frequently and easily accessible at the fingertips and swipes of Texas children and teenagers.

2. Specifically, when Snap makes the Snapchat app available in Apple’s App Store, it tells Texas consumers that Snapchat is rated “12+” (for users 12 and older) and that it contains

only “infrequent/mild” “profanity and crude humor,” “sexual content or nudity,” “alcohol, tobacco, and drug use or references,” and “mature/suggestive themes.” When in fact, that content is easily available *and even recommended by Snap* to users known to be as young as 13 years old. Snap similarly misrepresents the content of its app in the Google Play and Microsoft stores in a way that causes them to give its app a “T” for “Teen” rating, designating it as appropriate for 13-year-olds.

3. Snap also knowingly deceives Texas consumers about the damage its app causes to young users. Snap has designed its app to be highly addictive, especially to children and teens. One of the hallmark features of Snapchat is ephemeral content—content that disappears a short time after it is posted or after a user views it. Ephemeral content drives addiction by causing young users to return frequently to the app or risk missing out on content that will disappear. Snap also has designed its app to feature infinite scroll, which means that a user can scroll endlessly through content on Snapchat without any “end.” Infinite scroll also drives behavioral addiction by keeping users on the platform for long periods of time as they view a never-ending stream of content.

4. Other features of Snapchat also create or contribute to addiction in young users. Push notifications remind young users to visit the app frequently throughout the day and often also at all hours of the night. Autoplay automatically plays content when a user opens the app, propelling the user into the experience of scrolling content (which never ends, thanks to infinite scroll). Snapchat also publishes personal interactive metrics like “Snapcores” and “Snapstreaks,” which grade a user’s frequency of engaging with the app or frequency of engaging with another user. Users must maintain high levels of engagement with the Snapchat app to preserve or improve these personal interactive metrics.

5. All these features predictably lead to behavioral addiction among young users, which affects their mental and physical health. Snap is aware of this, but does not warn Snap users or their parents about them, and instead, it affirmatively represents that Snapchat is safe and appropriate for young users.

6. Because Snap knowingly deceives Snap consumers about its Snapchat social media app, Attorney General Ken Paxton brings this suit under the DTPA and the SCOPE Act. Attorney General Paxton seeks, in addition to civil penalties and other appropriate relief, a permanent injunction under the DTPA ordering Snap to stop its false, misleading, and deceptive representations to Texas minors and their parents and to comply with the SCOPE Act.

JURISDICTION

7. This action is brought by the Texas Attorney General's Office through its Consumer Protection Division in the name of the State of Texas ("Plaintiff" or the "State"), pursuant to the authority granted by Section 17.47 of the DTPA and Section 509.151 of the SCOPE Act. Section 509.151 of the SCOPE Act provides that a violation of the SCOPE Act constitutes a deceptive act or practice under the DTPA and may be pursued as an enforcement action by the Consumer Protection Division of the Texas Attorney General's Office. The State brings this action on the grounds that Defendant has engaged in, is engaging in, and is about to engage in "[f]alse, misleading, or deceptive acts or practices in the conduct of any trade or commerce," prohibited by Sections 17.46(a)–(b) of the DTPA. The State further brings this action on the grounds that Defendant has engaged in trade and commerce in the State of Texas in a manner that violates the

SCOPE Act, including but not limited to Sections 509.052, 509.054, and 509.101 of the SCOPE Act.¹

8. Upon information and belief, consumers in Texas, including teens in Collin County, use the Snapchat app and have been exposed to Defendant’s deceptive acts and practices.

9. In enforcement actions filed pursuant to Section 17.47 of the DTPA, the Attorney General may seek civil penalties, redress for consumers, and injunctive relief. In addition, the Attorney General may pursue reasonable attorney’s fees and litigation expenses in connection with the prosecution of the instant action, in accordance with Texas Government Code Section 402.006(c).

10. Texas courts may exercise personal jurisdiction over a nonresident entity if the Texas long-arm statute authorizes the exercise of personal jurisdiction and the exercise is consistent with federal, and state constitutional due-process guarantees. *State v. Yelp, Inc.*, 2025 WL2936466 (Tex. Ct. App. Oct. 16, 2025), *Moki Mac Rivr Expeditions v. Drugg*, 221 S.W.3d 569, 574 (Tex. 2007); see also Tex. Civ. Prac. & Rem. Code § 17.042 (Texas long-arm statute).

11. The Court has jurisdiction over Snap because it consented to personal jurisdiction by registering and transacting business in Texas. See *Mallory v. Norfolk S. Ry. Co.*, 600 U.S. 122 (2023); see also *Acacia Pipeline Corp. v. Champlin Expl., Inc.*, 769 S.W.2d 719, 720 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 1989, no writ) (“In return for the privilege of doing business in Texas, and enjoying the same rights and privileges as a domestic corporation, Champlin has consented to amenability to jurisdiction for purposes of all lawsuits within the state.”)

¹ On August 30, 2024, the court in *Computer & Communications Industry Association v. Paxton*, No. 1:24-CV-849-RP (W.D. Tex. Aug. 30, 2024), preliminarily enjoined enforcement of Sections 509.053 and 509.056(1) of the SCOPE Act. This petition does not allege violations of either section.

12. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant in this action. Snap operates a social media application and platform that it has directed to operate in the State of Texas. The Snapchat app has been activated by a device located in Texas thousands of times. Snap markets and advertises its product in Texas, including on the Apple App Store, Google Play Store, and Microsoft Store. Snap actively serves content to and collects data from those devices and accounts located in Texas. Snap generates millions of dollars of annual revenue in Texas by making Snapchat available to users here.

13. Snap compensates users in Texas for content that they create and post on the Snapchat app.²

14. When someone downloads and signs up for an account on Snapchat, they agree to Snap's Terms of Service, which is a contract between the user and Snap. Under that contract, the user agrees to allow Snap to collect data about the user, including the user's geographical location and IP address. In return, Snap makes the Snapchat application available to the user. This contractual relationship involves ongoing performance by both parties, with both the user and Snap performing under the contract each time the user accesses Snapchat.

15. The content that Snapchat displays to users is determined in part by the user's location. For example, a user of Snapchat in Texas is more likely to see content related to the University of Texas Longhorns simply by being located in Texas.

16. Snap sells advertisements to third parties to target users in Texas. The advertisements on Snapchat are targeted at users based in part on their locations. For example, a

² *About Snapchat's Monetization Program – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/862D-KBR7>.

Snapchat user might see an advertisement for a local barbecue restaurant based on his location in Austin.

17. The conduct described in this Petition arises from Snap's activities directed to Texas and Snapchat users in Texas.

18. Snap has availed itself of the benefit of transacting business in Texas through the marketing, sale, and operation of a well-known social media and advertising network. Snap is aware of its presence in Texas and the financial rewards it receives from operating within Texas, including its transactions with minors in Texas.

19. Snap has specifically targeted Texas parents, minors, teachers, businesses, and media in the State of Texas to market and promote the Snapchat app, continuously seeking to increase its Texas user-base through various means, and to gain business advantages from Texas-based users and their content.

VENUE

20. Venue is proper in Collin County, Texas pursuant to Section 17.47(b) of the DTPA because Defendant has done business in Collin County, and because transactions at issue in this suit have occurred in Collin County. Snapchat allows advertisers to target users by specific geographic locations, including Collin County, Texas. In June 2017, the Collin County Sheriff's Office issued a public warning about Snapchat's location-sharing features, evidencing Snapchat usage within the county. Upon information and belief, consumers in Collin County use the Snapchat app and have been exposed to Defendant's deceptive acts and practices.

DISCOVERY

21. The discovery in this case should be conducted under Level 3 pursuant to Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 190.4. Restrictions concerning expedited discovery under Texas Rule of

Civil Procedure 169 do not apply because the State seeks monetary relief greater than \$250,000 as well as non-monetary injunctive relief as part of its claims.

22. In addition to injunctive relief, the State claims entitlement to monetary relief in an amount greater than \$1,000,000, including civil penalties, reasonable attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs.

PARTIES

23. The Plaintiff, the State of Texas *ex rel.* Ken Paxton, Attorney General, is charged with enforcing the DTPA. Pursuant to TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. § 17.47, the Attorney General may initiate civil law enforcement proceedings in the name of the State to enjoin violations of the DTPA and to obtain other relief as may be appropriate in each case.

24. Defendant Snap Inc. ("Snap") is a foreign for-profit entity regularly transacting, soliciting, and conducting business in Texas that is incorporated in Delaware. Snap is headquartered at 3000 31st Street, Santa Monica, California. Snap's North American operations in 2024 yielded over \$5.3 billion in revenue. Snap is valued at more than \$12 billion.

PUBLIC INTEREST

25. The State has reason to believe that Defendant has engaged in, and continues to engage in, the unlawful acts and practices described below. In addition, the State has reason to believe that Defendant has caused injury, loss, and damage to the State, and has caused adverse effects to the lawful conduct of trade and commerce, thereby directly or indirectly affecting the people of this State. Therefore, the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General initiates this proceeding in the public interest. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. § 17.47(a).

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

I. Overview of Snapchat

26. The Snapchat app (“Snapchat”) is a social media platform that enables its users to create, share, and consume digital content—primarily photos and videos. The major elements of Snapchat, as they exist today, are briefly described below.

27. Generally, the Snapchat app opens to a screen on which the user can take photos or videos through the device’s camera. Users may create content by taking photos or videos on this screen or by importing existing photos or videos stored on their devices.

28. The Snapchat app allows users to modify their photos or videos, including by adding user-generated text or freehand drawings or by adding supplementary content created by Snap. For example, Snap makes “Lenses” available, which alter the appearance of human faces or other content in photos or videos. Photos and videos thus taken and modified are known as “Snaps.”

29. On Snapchat, users can add other users as “Friends.” So-called “Friends” on Snapchat may not actually know each other in real life. Users can share their Snaps with their Friends individually or in groups, or they can send text-only messages to Friends using the “Chat” function. Shared Snaps and Chats are usually ephemeral, meaning that the recipient can view them only for a limited time (for example, 24 hours), and once viewed, Snaps remain available for a limited time (for example, ten seconds).

30. Snapchat displays metrics for users that track the frequency of the user’s correspondence with Friends. “Snapstreaks” is a metric that records the number of consecutive days both users have sent Snaps to one another. “Best Friends” is a metric that measures, relatively speaking, who a user communicates with most frequently.

31. A user may also send Snaps or Chats to “My AI” in Snapchat, a chatbot that generates responses using generative artificial intelligence. The user exchanges content with “My AI” in the same way as any other Snapchat Friend.

32. Another Snapchat feature is “Stories,” which allows “Snaps” to be shared with all of a user’s Friends (or a subset of Friends). By default, Snaps posted to Stories are available for viewing for 24 hours and can be viewed by other users an unlimited number of times during that period. A Story posted to a subset of a user’s Friends is known as a “Private Story.”

33. The “Search” function on Snapchat allows users to find “Friends.” They can search for names or words, and the search results are based on the user’s search terms as well as the user’s past activity on the app.

34. The element known as “Search,” among other things, allows users to search for other users that they might add as a contact. The results of the search are based both on the user’s input search terms and the user’s other activity on the app.

35. The “Find Friends” feature also recommends other users to add as “Friends.” This feature makes recommendations based on an algorithm that takes into account the user’s activity on Snapchat.

36. Snapchat also allows a user to view Snaps created by other users without adding them as “Friends.”

37. The “Snap Maps” feature allows users to view Snaps that are associated with physical locations on a map. Any Snapchat user can add Snaps to locations on the Snap Map.

38. Snapchat’s “Spotlight” feature allows users to scroll through short-video Snaps in a never-ending feed. “Spotlight” features infinite scrolling (a user will never get to the “end” of the content), and each video plays automatically, one after another. Any Snapchat user may post

Snaps in Spotlight. Of the submitted content, Snapchat chooses the next Snap to play for any given user based on an algorithm that takes into account the user's past activity on the platform.

39. Snapchat's "Discover" feature is similar: it allows users to view Snaps and other content in a feed with infinite scroll and auto-play, but Snaps in Discover are submitted only by certain semi-professional users of Snapchat or professional publishers with whom Snap has entered into agreements for this purpose. Of the submitted content, Snapchat recommends the next Snap to a user based on an algorithm that takes into account the user's activity on the platform.

40. Snap also offers, for a recurring fee, its Snapchat+ product, which adds a set of many additional elements to the Snapchat app that are unavailable to non-paying users. One such additional element, for example, is the capability for a user to view the "Best Friends" of other users. Snapchat advertises Snapchat+ to its users in various parts of the app.

41. Snap also allows users to make in-app purchases. For example, a user may opt to pay a one-time fee to restore a "Snapstreak" that has ended.

42. Young people are a critical user base of Snapchat. CEO Evan Spiegel remarked that he and his cofounder "were thrilled to hear that most of [Snapchat's users] were high school students who were using Snapchat as a new way to pass notes in class—behind-the-back photos of teachers and funny faces were sent back and forth throughout the day. Server data supported this and we saw peaks of activity during the school day and dips on the weekends."³

43. Snap says its app "delivers on the emotions that Gen Z seeks and it does so consistently across the platform. . . . Remember, this is a group that plays a major role in this eye-

³ Evan Spiegel, *Let's Chat*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/AE97-TZ3L>.

popping stat: People who use Snapchat open the app 30+ times a day and send 4 billion+ messages.”⁴

44. Today, millions of young people in the United States use Snapchat. Upon information and belief, this includes consumers in Texas and Collin County. According to the Pew Research Center, 55% of teens use Snapchat, 48% of them use it “daily,” and 13% say that they are on Snapchat “[a]lmost constantly.”⁵

II. Snap’s False, Deceptive and Misleading Representations About the Dangers of Using Snapchat.

45. Snap has established its enormous market share among teenage users of social media in part by marketing Snapchat as safe for minor users.

46. As part of its intentional marketing of its app as safe, Snap assigns itself a “12+” rating in the Apple App Store and a “T for Teen” rating in the Google Play and Microsoft Stores. Consumers are presented with these age ratings when they download Snapchat on a smartphone. These age ratings are highly deceptive—both because Snapchat hosts enormous amounts of mature content and facilitates dangerous activities and because of the psychologically harmful features of Snapchat as detailed below.

47. Apple, Inc. (“Apple”) requires developers like Snap who submit an app for inclusion in Apple’s App Store to answer an age-rating questionnaire. Apple says that apps that host user-generated content (like Snapchat) “should share the age rating of the highest age-rated creator content available in the app.”⁶ Apple warns developers: “We have lots of kids downloading lots of apps,” and app developers like Defendant “have to do [their] part” to keep kids safe. *Id.*

⁴ *What Does Gen Z Want From Brands?*, SNAP (June 22, 2023), <https://perma.cc/LCM9-69NH>.

⁵ Michelle Faverio & Olivia Sidoti, *Teens, Social Media and Technology 2024*, PEW RSCH. CTR. (Dec. 12, 2024), <https://perma.cc/YF89-XYZW>.

⁶ *App Review Guidelines*, APPLE, <https://perma.cc/3GLR-7NR4>.

Apple also tells developers to “[a]nswer the age rating questions in App Store Connect honestly so that your app aligns properly with parental controls.” *Id.* “If your app is mis-rated,” Apple warns, “customers might be surprised by what they get, or it could trigger an inquiry from government regulators.” *Id.* Apple also informs developers: “you are responsible for complying with local requirements in each territory where your app is available.” *Id.*

48. Apple’s age-rating questionnaire asks *Snap* to describe the content available on the Snapchat app in each of these categories: “Alcohol, Tobacco or Drug Use or References,” “Sexual Content or Nudity,” “Mature/Suggestive Themes,” and “Profanity or Crude Humor.” Based on the self-selected answers to these questions—“none,” “infrequent/mild,” or “frequent/intense”—Apple automatically generates an age-rating, and Snap knows the age rating that its self-reported answers will produce. Apple also offers every app developer (including Snap) the option to self-select a higher age rating than the one Apple suggests based on the app developer’s answers regarding the various categories of content. Snap knows that the age rating it selects for the Snapchat app will be displayed directly to consumers, and it specifically intends for its age rating statements to be communicated directly to Texas consumers.

49. Snap self-selects the answer “infrequent/mild” for each of the described categories. By doing so, Snap chooses to make the following representations displayed on its page in the App Store:

“Infrequent/Mild Profanity or Crude Humor”

“Infrequent/Mild Mature/Suggestive Themes”

“Infrequent/Mild Sexual Content and Nudity”

“Infrequent/Mild Alcohol, Tobacco, or Drug Use or References”

50. Snap's answers cause Apple to offer a "12+" age rating option. Apple defines apps with the "12+" age rating as apps that "may also contain infrequent mild language, frequent or intense cartoon, fantasy, or realistic violence, infrequent or mild mature or suggestive themes, and simulated gambling, which may not be suitable for children under the age of 12."⁷ Snap chooses to rate its app "12+."

51. The next higher (and highest) age rating is "17+." Apple offers Snap the option to choose this rating, but Snap has never done so. Apple defines apps with the "17+" age rating as apps that "may also contain frequent and intense offensive language, frequent and intense cartoon, fantasy, or realistic violence, and frequent and intense mature, horror, and suggestive themes; plus sexual content, nudity, alcohol, tobacco and drugs which may not be suitable for children under the age of 17."

52. Snap also makes Snapchat available in the Google Play and Microsoft Stores. Snap responds to the age-rating questions in a way that allows it to claim a "T for Teen" age rating for Snapchat. Snap knows and intends that Google and Microsoft will convey the "T" for "Teen" age rating to consumers on Snap's behalf. A "T" for "Teen" rating is defined as: "Content is generally suitable for ages 13 and up. May contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood, simulated gambling and/or infrequent use of strong language."⁸ By contrast, an "M" for "Mature" rating is defined as: "Content is generally suitable for ages 17 and up. May contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content and/or strong language." Snap also knows and intends that these age-rating representations will be communicated directly to Texas consumers in the Google and Microsoft app stores.

⁷ *App Store Preview: Age Ratings*, APPLE, <https://perma.cc/2TXS-T39N>.

⁸ *Apps & Games content ratings on Google Play*, GOOGLE PLAY HELP, <https://perma.cc/U3Z6-HGR2> (North America & South America rating standard).

53. As detailed below, Snap’s age-rating representations are deceptive. Snap’s age-rating representations both affirmatively misrepresent the Snapchat app and willfully omit material facts about the Snapchat app. The relationship between Snap and its users (or their parents) is such that Snap has a duty to disclose material facts about the content available on the Snapchat app, based on Snap’s superior knowledge about its own app and based on objective circumstances.

A. Profanity or Crude Humor

54. Profanity on Snapchat is neither “infrequent” nor “mild.”

55. The State’s investigation demonstrates that minors are easily able to access videos with frequent and intense profanity. Prior to the filing of this lawsuit, an investigator in the Attorney General’s Office set up an account on Snapchat on a new iPhone using a 13-year-old’s birthday. Using this 13-year-old’s account, the investigator found that minors are easily able to access videos containing frequent and intense profanity, including the following examples:

- A video with the voiceover: “Good morning spicy fucking burrito. Here is today’s fucking forecast. The day will start out with 15 what the fucks per hour. We are expecting a few feet of fucking drama, with a pile of bullshit blowing in from all directions. Extreme fucking sarcasm with the occasional patch of unwanted opinions, followed by a very high probability of I couldn’t fucking care any less.
- A young woman speaking into the camera: “The word ‘fuck.’ ‘Fuck.’ It’s my favorite word. It’s very, very stylish. It can mean you’re happy, sad, mad, glad. Whatever; it’s an action, adjective. Whatever you want it to mean. There was a study talking about the word ‘fuck,’ and that those people are more intelligent.”
- A video of two people posturing sexually, set to the lyrics: “I’m a hood bitch, I like freaky shit, come put that dick down my throat, come hot and ready, no soft shit, I’ll leave a nigga dick swole.”
- A woman dancing and making sexual gestures to the lyrics: “Damn, let me see what you’re worth; heard that pussy gold, got me liftin’ up her skirt; if I don’t bust a nut, then that ho pussy’s dirt; don’t worry ‘bout it, put that dick down her throat.”

56. Such content is readily available on Snapchat, yet Snap tells Texas consumers in the App Store that “profanity or crude humor” is “infrequent/mild” on the platform. That is false, deceptive, and misleading.

B. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use or References

57. Alcohol, tobacco, and drug use or references on the Snapchat app are neither “infrequent” nor “mild.”

58. The State’s investigation reveals that alcohol, tobacco, and drug use or references appear frequently, are intense, and are visible to minor users on Snapchat. These are just a few of many examples:

- A video of 8 empty glasses and 4 full glasses of alcohol on a bar, with the text “Less than 30 mi”
- A man singing by a campfire: “Gonna take my dope to the motel room, gonna get fried, til I can’t speak no more; ... rolling on a torch, taking whippets til I’m hoarse, pass out in an alley, woke up pissing off a porch”
- An account of a young man with video after video featuring large dabs of marijuana and the after-effects of eating them.

59. Other publicly reported examples confirm that drug content on Snapchat is not “mild,” or “infrequent.” Numerous young people, including young people in Texas, have been exposed to drug dealers on Snapchat offering illicit or regulated drugs for sale.⁹ Such content on Snapchat includes posts featuring lists of drugs and their associated prices. Many young people have died from consuming drugs they purchased from dealers on Snapchat.

60. [REDACTED]

⁹ See, e.g., Dorothy Sedovic, *Sheriff: Tyler drug dealer used Snapchat to promote sales*, KLTN (Feb. 13, 2020), <https://perma.cc/73FX-CQC5>.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

61. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

62. Despite the ready availability and severity of drug, alcohol, and tobacco content on Snapchat, Snap tells Texas consumers in the App Store that “alcohol, tobacco, and drug . . . references” are “infrequent/mild” on the platform. That is false, deceptive, and misleading.

C. Sexual Content and Nudity

63. Sexual content and nudity on the Snapchat app is neither “infrequent” nor “mild.”

64. The State’s investigation revealed abundant sexual content on Snapchat, including:

- A woman pulling her midriff top up and down to reveal most of her bare breasts from different angles.
- A woman explaining to the “ladies” how to “reverse yeehaw, but on his face” while making gestures to describe giving a hand job at the same time. “You won’t be able to hear him moan, but trust me, you’ll feel it.”
- A woman in loose shorts sitting on the camera, with her buttocks showing.
- A woman asking to the camera: “Guys, would you rather wake up in bed with head every day before you start your long days, or have it when you come home so you can relax and have a nice sleep?”
- A video in which a woman’s breasts and nipples are visible through a mesh shirt.

65. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

66. Snapchat also has long been referred to as a “sexting” app, where users can send and receive sexually explicit images or videos or other sexual content.

67. Snap’s ephemeral design, which quickly deletes users’ messages, allows and encourages young people to exchange sexual content.

68. Snapchat’s design enables predators to solicit from, and easily exchange sexual content with, minors on the app. Such incidents have been widely reported, including in Texas.¹⁰

69. In 2023, 23% of young Snapchat users had already had an online sexual interaction, 13% with someone they thought was 18 or older. Of minors who had an online sexual interaction in 2023, 16% had it on Snapchat—more than any other platform.¹¹

70. Numerous Texas minors have been solicited or abused by adults over Snapchat.¹²

71. Snapchat also provides a hunting ground for criminals who benefit from unique Snapchat features to enable them to persuade or con young people into sending sexual images of themselves, and then threaten to release those images unless their victims send more intimate images, engage in sexual acts, or send money.

72. [REDACTED]

¹⁰ See, e.g., Press Release, United States Attorney’s Office, Western District of Texas, Austin Man Arrested for Alleged Sexual Exploitation of a Minor Through Social Media (Aug. 29, 2025), <https://perma.cc/PQ89-RB89>.

¹¹ *Youth Perspectives on Online Safety, 2023* at 14, THORN (Aug. 2024), <https://perma.cc/ZCR8-E39R>.

¹² See, e.g., Zak Wellerman, *POLICE: East Texas man exploited children on social media for explicit images, shared child porn*, CBS19 (Oct. 13, 2025), <https://perma.cc/6FUP-952J>; Elizabeth Evans, *Harris County man solicited nudes from underage girls through Snapchat*, FOX 7 AUSTIN (Sep. 4, 2025), <https://perma.cc/7ACA-6FAA>; Cannon Fritz, *Man directed Mart, Texas girl to send him sexually explicit images over Snapchat, traveled to girl’s home for sex: affidavit*, KWTX (June 13, 2025), <https://perma.cc/MF2K-YJJ5>.

73. Even though sexual content and nudity is readily accessible and exchanged on Snapchat, Snap tells Texas consumers in the App Store that “sexual content and nudity” is “infrequent/mild” on the platform. That is false, deceptive, and misleading.

D. Mature/Suggestive Themes

74. “Mature/suggestive themes” include content related to the topics already described, as well as other complex themes that are suitable only for adult audiences such as suicide, self-harm, eating disorders, and other dangerous behavior.

75. “Mature/suggestive themes” on Snapchat are neither “mild” nor “infrequent.”

76. Snap takes enforcement actions on only a tiny fraction of content and accounts reported by its users for self-harm and suicide content. In the first half of 2025, Snap received a total of 307,660 reports about content or accounts related to “self-harm & suicide” but took action on only 0.2% of those reports.¹³ Snap’s systems were only able to proactively identify 289 instances of self-harm and suicide content in that same six-month period, *globally*.¹⁴

77. Snapchat also encourages dangerous stunts. For example, one former Snapchat feature, its speed filter, encouraged users to snap while driving at dangerous speeds and caused multiple deaths.¹⁵

78. The State’s own investigation reveals that posts containing mature and suggestive themes often occur on Snapchat and are intense. These are just a few of many examples:

- A video with the text and lyrics: “I wanna die, I wanna leave. I wanna disappear from everything. I wanna hide. I wanna see what life would be

¹³ *Transparency Report*, SNAP (last updated July 1, 2025), <https://perma.cc/8YLA-TLKT> (citation modified).

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Bobby Allyn, *Snapchat Ends ‘Speed Filter’ That Critics Say Encouraged Reckless Driving*, NPR (June 17, 2021), <https://perma.cc/D5CW-YK26>.

like if it wasn't for me. Fucking it up, making it worse, hurting myself, throwing on dirt, making shit hurt.”

- A content creator of sexual material telling viewers that her content is “not for kids,” and not for anyone “under the age of 23.”
- A video with the words: “My ADHD fucking makes me distracted as fuck; like, every time I try to fucking focus I’m like look; there’s something shiny, what’s behind me, what am I going to eat? ... my thoughts are racing or I’m fucking bored. So fuck my life, I’m gonna cry and laugh and fucking scream; well that’s my luck, so fuckity fuck, I am ADHD.”
- A video with the text and voiceover: “Oh I get it now. I’m the fuck up child. The one person in this family that can’t do anything right. Why was I even born in the first place? Do you know what you’ve done to me? I constantly stay up late thinking of all the things I fuck up and the fact that I can’t seem to do anything right. I feel so fucking worthless.”

79. Even though such posts are readily available on Snapchat, Snap tells Texas consumers in the App Store that “mature/suggestive themes” are “infrequent/mild” on the platform. That is false, deceptive, and misleading.

E. Additional Snapchat Features That Make Its 12+ and T for Teen Age Ratings Deceptive

80. Other aspects of the Snapchat platform make the platform’s age ratings and other claims to being safe for minor users highly deceptive.

My AI

81. In February 2023, Snap introduced “My AI,” a chatbot feature, for Snapchat+ subscribers.¹⁶ In April 2023, Snap made My AI available to all Snapchat users.

82. Snap made My AI available to Snapchat’s users, including young users, without adequate vetting or safety measures, exposing those users to mature content and “conversations” with the technology.

¹⁶ Geoffrey A. Fowler, *Snapchat Tried to Make a Safe AI. It Chats with Me about Booze and Sex*, WASH. POST (Mar. 14, 2023), <https://perma.cc/PP86-GJWY> (quoting Snap spokesperson Liz Markman).

83. According to a *Washington Post* columnist who tested My AI with a 13-year-old account shortly after it was introduced, the chatbot “gave . . . advice on how to mask the smell of alcohol and pot,” “how to deceive the supposed teen’s parents,” and “about having sex for the first time with a partner who is 31.”¹⁷

84. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

“Friend” Adding Features

85. Snapchat users can connect with “Friends” on Snapchat in multiple ways, including through the “Find Friends” feature (previously called “Quick Add”). Find Friends connects users who may not know each other in the real world, even when users are not seeking those connections.

86. Find Friends has connected minors with adult strangers seeking to groom, harass, exploit, and even assault them, or to sell them illegal drugs.

87. Adult strangers can target and connect with young users on Snapchat easily in numerous ways, including through searching and through Snapchat’s “Mention” feature. If a user merely “view[s] a Story that has a Snapchatter Mentioned in it, [they] can add that Snapchatter!”¹⁸

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *How to Add Friends on Snapchat – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/6496-EXY2>.

88. Adults have groomed, harassed, exploited, assaulted, and sold illicit drugs to minors they connected with on Snapchat because of Snapchat’s recommendations and friend-adding features. For example, a former Perryton Independent School District coach was charged with enticing a 15-year-old student into a months-long, abusive sexual relationship; the abuser groomed his victim by adding her as a friend, and establishing a relationship with her, on Snapchat.¹⁹

89. Snap says it has attempted to make it more difficult for predators and drug dealers to find minors on Snapchat. Snap touted these changes and claimed they made Snapchat safe for young users. In this way, Snap sought to give consumers the impression that strangers could not easily target minors on Snapchat, when Snap knew or should have known that was not the case.

90. In 2022, Snap claimed that it made it “impossible to add users under 18 unless there are a certain number of friends in common.”²⁰ In 2024, Snap tried again, saying it would “prevent delivery of a friend request altogether when teens send or receive a friend request from someone they don’t have mutual friends with, and that person also has a history of accessing Snapchat in locations often associated with scamming activity.”²¹ But it is still possible for predatory adults to find minors on Snapchat, and Snap knows that.

91. This is especially so because Snap knows that the Snapchat age gate (the mechanism it uses to screen out users under 13) is unreliable, and at least some of its safety features have at times depended on the age a user gives at the age gate when signing up to use Snapchat.

¹⁹ Joe Ashley, *Ex-Texas high school coach charged in sexual relationship with student he called “wifey,” US attorney’s office says*, 10KWTX (June 13, 2024), <https://perma.cc/W5KD-MX2Q>.

²⁰ Sara Fischer, *Snapchat Making It Harder for Strangers to Find Users Under 18*, AXIOS (Jan. 18, 2022), <https://perma.cc/P9W9-ZJHE>.

²¹ *New Features to Help Protect Our Community*, SNAP VALUES (June 25, 2024), <https://perma.cc/7WE4-GCK5>.

When a user is prompted to enter their birthday while setting up their account, most social media platforms default to the current day: Snapchat, however, defaults to 18 years prior to the current day. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The app's age gate default of 18 has helped render Snap's efforts to protect young users from predatory adults practically useless for any safety features that depend on accurate age-gate information.

Snap Map

92. Snap Map can display users' locations in real time. Predators and drug dealers use this feature of Snapchat to locate minor victims. Young people also can locate drug dealers on Snap Map, where the dealers post their menus and prices, to buy and arrange delivery of illicit drugs.

93. Snap also previously offered Ghost Trails on Snapchat+. Ghost Trails showed users their friends' movements for the prior 24-hour period.

94. Snap wants consumers, especially parents, to believe its policies make young users safe, but they do not.

95. Snap tells parents in its Parent's Guide: "By default, location-sharing is off for all Snapchatters. They have the option to decide to share it on the Map with friends—but never with strangers."²²

²² *Parent's Guide: Snapchat's Family Center*, SNAPCHAT (2022), <https://perma.cc/UJP9-JDS8>.

96. This is false, deceptive, and misleading. Young users can and do form connections with adult strangers they have not met in real life through Snapchat because of how Snapchat is designed. Once that happens, it is easy for those strangers to find young people on the Snap Map, and vice versa.

97. Additionally, when users submit Snaps to “Our Story,” they are sharing them with the broader community, not just their friends. Those Snaps may show up on the Snap Map.

98. The ease with which strangers can follow and find each other in real time on Snap Map is dangerous for young people. It is not a feature consistent with a 12+ or T for Teen age rating.

Ephemeral Content

99. Snapchat’s baseline ephemerality also deprives law enforcement of critical evidence to pursue charges against ill-meaning adults who prey on young people on and through Snapchat. A drug dealer, for example, can find a teen on Snapchat and sell him or her a lethal fentanyl-laced pill, but when the teen dies and the messages are deleted from Snap’s servers, law enforcement has nothing from Snapchat connecting the dealer with the teen’s death.

100. Minors use Snapchat for sexting as well as exchanging content featuring underage alcohol and drug use. Predators target young people for sextortion scams, drug deals, and grooming, knowing that Snap will erase from existence the illicit material they exchange. Snapchat’s ephemerality gives young people a false sense of security in engaging with other users—even strangers—up to and including feeling less inhibited to seek illicit drugs or share nude images of themselves.

101. In reality, as Snap knows, predators can take screen shots or otherwise save in perpetuity “disappearing” content without their targets’ knowledge. This content can then be, and

is, used to extort young people, pressure and coerce them into sending more explicit material, or illicitly store their images or sell them to pedophiles, among other things.

102. Snapchat also features a “My Eyes Only” option to keep Snaps “extra private!”²³ Snaps saved in My Eyes Only are protected by a passcode, and Snap itself cannot access them. The feature encourages youth to hide problematic Snaps from their parents and enables predators to retain illicit content—including child sexual abuse material—away from even Snap itself.

F. Snap’s Deceptive Claims and Omissions About the Family Center

103. Snap has lagged considerably and unjustifiably behind other social media companies in creating parental controls for the Snapchat app. While competitors like Google and Instagram created parental oversight tools as early as 2017, Snap only made its parental controls feature, called the Family Center, available on August 9, 2022.

104. Snap then touted the parental controls that it makes available in its Family Center in an effort to deflect from the many dangers associated with using Snapchat. For example, Snap tells parents that the company “take[s] [its] responsibility to help protect teens on Snapchat extremely seriously” and claims that through the Family Center it “arm[s] parents with in-app safety tools and resources to help their teens use Snapchat safely.”²⁴ Snap also markets the Family Center as a set of “tools and resources to help parents get more insight into who their teens are friends with on Snapchat and who they have been messaging with.”²⁵ Such statements are deceptive and contain material omissions; despite Snap’s claims to the contrary, the Family Center fails to provide parents with tools that could be used to mitigate the risks and dangers of Snapchat use described above.

²³ *How does My Eyes Only work? – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/X796-KRZF>.

²⁴ *Snapchat Family Safety Hub*, SNAPCHAT, <https://perma.cc/FM3T-RNBW>.

²⁵ SNAPCHAT, *Introducing Snapchat’s Family Center* (YouTube, Aug. 9, 2022), <https://perma.cc/7WHE-TLVG>.

105. As Snap internally recognizes, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

106. Snap has also designed the Family Center parental controls to make them extremely burdensome for parents to use. A parent who wishes to use Family Center parental controls must download the Snapchat app onto his phone, set up a Snapchat account, and request permission from the child to link the parent's account with the child's account— [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Once Family Center controls are set up, the parent must remember to regularly check the app to monitor the information provided there, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

107. Even when parents successfully set up and monitor Family Center parental controls, these limited controls fail to protect teens from the myriad dangers of using Snapchat. Family Center functions are largely limited to allowing parents to see who their teen is "Friends" with on Snapchat and who they have been communicating with. But this information does not illuminate much, given the sheer number of "Friends" teens connect with on Snapchat. The Family Center gives parents no insight into their teens' exposure to harmful or mature material like nude images or drug content, no ability to set privacy controls for their teens, no ability to set time limits for their teens, and no ability to discern when their teens bypass parental controls, for example, by

using secondary accounts. Moreover, teens, who are often more familiar with technology than their parents, can easily evade even the limited parental controls that are available in the Family Center.

III. Snap's Addictive Design and Other Features Target Texas Teens.

108. Something has gone wrong in the lives of American teenagers. Since the early 2010s, studies examining adolescent well-being have documented increasing symptoms of depression, loneliness, and unhappiness, with rates of major depression among teenagers more than doubling.

109. The early 2010s was also a turning point for American teens' use of technology. Teen smartphone ownership more than tripled between 2011 and 2015. Smartphones with front-facing cameras (which make it easier to take selfies) were introduced in 2010, and over the ensuing years teenagers' use of social media exploded. By 2017, 78% of 8th graders reported that they used social media almost every day.

110. A robust body of research shows that social media use is responsible for the nationwide teen mental health crisis. Increased use of social media among teens is associated with increased rates of depression. Teenagers who are heavy social media users are also more likely to report that they have hurt themselves on purpose. Experiments on social media use further support the same conclusion, showing that teens who give up or reduce their social media use have less anxiety and depression compared to those who do not. Excessive social media use at nighttime has also been shown to have an adverse and clinically significant effect on teens' sleep, thereby interfering with cognitive development, performance in school, and overall well-being.

111. One of the major mechanisms through which social media use causes mental health problems in teens is through behavioral addiction. A behavioral addiction occurs when someone fails to resist engaging in behaviors or experiences that are compelling in the short term despite

harming their well-being in the long run. When a teenager becomes addicted to social media, it crowds out other activities that promote psychological well-being and healthy cognitive development such as time with family and friends, physical activity, and sleep.

112. Excessive and addictive use of social media by young people is a direct result of the intentional design choices of the owners of certain social media platforms, including Snap. As the U.S. Surgeon General explained in a recent advisory, social-media platforms deploy features like “[p]ush notifications, autoplay, infinite scroll, quantifying and displaying popularity (i.e., ‘likes’), and algorithms that leverage user data to serve content recommendations” that lead to “excessive use and behavioral dysregulation.”²⁶ Those features “overstimulate the reward center in the brain” and “trigger pathways comparable to addiction,” resulting in “changes in brain structure similar to changes seen in individuals with substance use or gambling addictions.”²⁷ The Surgeon General noted that “we are experiencing a national youth mental health crisis” and called on lawmakers to “act swiftly” to “limit[] the use of [addictive] features” by platforms.²⁸

113. Snapchat uses a wide variety of addictive features in its app. First, Snapchat uses infinite scrolling, which allows new content to constantly load, giving the appearance of an endless page. Infinite scrolling is harmful and promotes behavioral addiction because it eliminates natural stopping cues that would otherwise end episodes of use. Without such stopping cues, people tend to allow an episode of use to continue by default, and research shows that infinite scrolling contributes to overuse of social media.

²⁶ *Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory* at 9, OFF. SURGEON GEN. (2023), <https://perma.cc/3GPW-XDBY>.

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *Id.* at 13, 15.

114. Both Stories and Spotlight present content via infinite scrolling, and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Snap maintains this feature of its platform even though an internal Snap document [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

115. Second, Snapchat uses push notifications, which are alerts that appear on a user's phone screen when they are not using Snapchat that are designed to entice the user back onto the app. Push notifications exploit users' natural tendency to seek and attend to environmental feedback, serving as distractors that monopolize attention. Young users are especially sensitive to these triggers and less able to control their response and resist reopening the app. Snapchat sends push notifications to users, regardless of age, frequently and at all hours of the day and night. They disrupt young people at school and interfere with homework, time with family and friends, and sleep.

116. Third, Snapchat uses personal interactive metrics that display the number of times other users have clicked a button to show their reaction to content or have shared content. Such interactive metrics are powerful sources of feedback that drive engagement by activating neural circuits in the brain that are associated with reward processing. Research has found that adolescents show increased sensitivity to feedback provided through interactive metrics and that their engagement in social media is driven more strongly by this feedback than is adults' engagement.

117. Snapchat includes a variety of interactive personal metrics, including a button on the Spotlight page that shows the number of times a video has been reposted as well as a “Snapscore”—a number that appears on each user’s public profile that reflects the type and volume of engagements the user has undertaken on Snapchat. The higher a user’s Snapscore, the higher that user’s engagement on Snapchat.

118. Perhaps the most problematic interactive metric on Snapchat is Snapstreaks. A Snapstreak is a designation Snapchat gives to conversations between users who exchange at least one snap per day for more than three days. When users enter a Snapstreak, a fire ball emoji appears next to their chat. When users are about to lose their streak (meaning one user has not sent a snap in almost 24 hours), Snapchat warns them.

119. Snapstreaks can cause and contribute to compulsive use and social comparison in young users who are particularly vulnerable to pressures to continue Snapstreaks. Young users often view Snapstreaks as evidence of the strength of their real-life friendships, and they feel immense pressure to continue them for fear of losing their streak and potentially upsetting their real-life friends.

120. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Rather than taking steps to address the harmful effects of Snapstreaks on the platform’s users, Snap directly monetizes this abusive aspect of its product by offering to restore users’ lost Snapstreaks for a fee. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

121. Fourth, Snapchat uses auto-play video which allows a video to play without any action on the part of the user. Like infinite scrolling, auto-play of videos contributes to addictiveness by eliminating stopping cues and encouraging extended viewing sessions.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

122. Fifth, Snap incorporates ephemeral content in its app. Snap markets disappearing messages as one of the core features of Snapchat: at Snapchat, “Delete is our default.”²⁹ This means most messages sent over Snapchat are automatically deleted once they have been viewed or have expired. When Snap deletes messages, it deletes them from the app and from Snapchat servers.

123. The disappearing nature of Snapchat content contributes to the addictive nature of the app for young people. This aspect of Snapchat encourages users to open the app and keep coming back to it constantly, and it preys on minor users who are especially sensitive to a fear of missing content and social interaction.

124. Sixth, Snap also uses various gimmicks known as “Charms” to gamify users’ relationships with the goal of encouraging them to increase their usage of Snapchat.

125. “Charms are fun, special mementos that celebrate your friendships! Charms are added based on your interactions and relationships with your friends.”³⁰ Snap says that “Charms are special surprises that are added based on your relationships with your friends and how you

²⁹ *When does Snapchat delete Snaps and Chats?* – Snapchat Support, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/JC5P-XCTD>.

³⁰ *What are Charms on Snapchat?* – Snapchat Support, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/88MY-NPQG>.

interact with each other. It's about having fun.”³¹

126. Like Snapstreaks, Charms are a way for young people to evaluate their real-life friendships on Snapchat's terms. The more users interact with each other on Snapchat, the more “Charms” they receive. And, because Charms are “surprises,” users are encouraged to keep up their engagement to see what new Charms might appear. Charms may even appear if users have not been communicating to specifically encourage them to restart their engagement with each other.

127. Prior to Charms, Snapchat had Trophies, which were emojis that users could earn by engaging in certain tasks on Snapchat. The trophies were visible to users' friends. Like Charms, Trophies were designed to encourage more engagement on Snapchat and contributed to compulsive use.

128. Seventh is perhaps Snapchat's most extreme method of user manipulation: the app's Friend Solar System. The Friend Solar System is a feature available to users who pay for a Snapchat+ subscription. Snap explains it this way:

As a Snapchat+ subscriber, you'll see a ‘Best Friends’ badge with a gold ring around it on someone's Friendship Profile. ‘Best Friends’ means they're among the eight friends you Snap and Chat with the most. Tapping on the badge will show you which planet you are in their Solar System, with each planet representing a different position in their Best Friends list.³²

129. This means that young people will be able to see if (according to Snapchat) they are as valuable to their “friends” as their “friends” are to them. A user's friend might show up as Mercury in his solar system but only be Jupiter or Neptune in the friend's solar system.³³ This

³¹ *Id.*

³² *How do Friend Solar Systems work? – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/Q3AH-7WV3>.

³³ *Id.*

feature causes tremendous stress for young people, who are acutely and uniquely vulnerable to social pressure and validation.³⁴ As one teen commented to the *Wall Street Journal*, “A lot of kids my age have trouble differentiating best friends on Snapchat from actual best friends in real life.” As such, young people reportedly have “seen friendships splinter and young love wither due to the knowledge that someone else ranks higher on the app.”

130. In response to public backlash from parents and others, Snap turned the friend solar system off by default. But it is still available to users who pay the fee for a subscription to Snapchat+.

131. Finally, Snap uses algorithms that it fine-tunes to recommend content that maximizes the amount of time users spend on the platform. These algorithms are designed to keep users on Snapchat for as long as possible, regardless of the consequences for users’ mental health and well-being, and they promote behavioral addiction among young users.

132. Other Snapchat features also affect young users’ mental health. Snapchat is well known for its “lenses”—photo filters that Snap describes as “[augmented reality] experiences [that] transform the way you look and the world around you!”³⁵

133. Some Snapchat lenses fundamentally and realistically alter the appearance of a user’s skin and facial features in a manner akin to plastic surgery or other cosmetic procedures. Such beauty-oriented face lenses cause many users to become unsatisfied with their real faces, leading to anxiety and sometimes driving users to seek real-life cosmetic procedures. This form of body dysmorphic disorder has been dubbed “Snapchat Dysmorphia.”³⁶

³⁴ Julie Jargon, *Snapchat’s Friend-Ranking Feature Adds to Teen Anxiety*, WALL ST. J. (Mar. 30, 2024), <https://perma.cc/VSK6-N97X>.

³⁵ *How do I use Lenses on Snapchat? – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/A223-A6HL>.

³⁶ Elle Hunt, *Faking It: How Selfie Dysmorphia Is Driving People To Seek Surgery*, THE GUARDIAN (Jan. 23, 2019), <https://perma.cc/FY85-RABV>.

134. Snapchat’s beauty lenses cause emotional damage to younger users, particularly girls. Young people are still developing and forming their identities, and they are vulnerable to the negative impacts of this face-altering technology.

135. The use of beauty lenses that emulate plastic surgery has led to disastrous consequences for younger users. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

136. Snap bills Snapchat as unique among its social media platform peers in ways that supposedly make it safer and more authentic. For example, a Snap media campaign touts Snapchat’s supposed lack of features that promote social comparison: “Less likes. More love” and “Less social media. More Snapchat.”³⁷ Snap goes so far as to say it “was built as an antidote to social media.”³⁸ Such claims are highly deceptive in light of the manipulative design features of Snapchat that promote behavioral addiction and encourage teens to compare themselves, their relationships, and their social standing to others. Snap also deceptively fails to warn users about these dangerous and psychologically damaging aspects of its product. The relationship between Snap and its users (or their parents) is such that Snap has a duty to disclose material facts about the addictiveness of the Snapchat app, based on Snap’s superior knowledge about its own app and based on objective circumstances.

³⁷ *Less Likes. More Love*, SNAP NEWSROOM (June 3, 2024), <https://perma.cc/WY9Q-BXDP>.

³⁸ *Hearing on Online Protection for Children, Before the Sen. Com., Sci. & Transp. Subcomm.* at 1:29–31 (Oct. 26, 2021), <https://bit.ly/3IoXzpR> (Statement of Jennifer Stout, Vice President of Global Public Policy, Snap, Inc.).

IV. Snap's Deception Has Caused Substantial Injury to Texas Consumers.³⁹

137. Snap's deception causes substantial harm to Texas consumers.

138. Parents check the age rating of apps and associated content descriptors before allowing their children to download and use them. Parents may supervise their children's devices to see which apps their children are downloading or use parental controls to prevent their children from downloading apps with particular age ratings.

139. Snap's representations and acts are particularly important to parents and other Snapchat users because once a Snapchat user sees harmful content on the app, it cannot be "unseen." Similarly, once a young person experiences a harmful or dangerous feature or interaction, the effects can be long-lasting.

140. Snap knows that parents care about what their teens will be exposed to on Snapchat. Snap's misrepresentations seek to prevent parents who are unfamiliar with Snapchat's addictive features and the mature content it hosts from developing such concerns. They seek to convince parents that Snapchat is safe for their teens, so they will download Snapchat and allow their teens to do so.

141. Consumers, particularly parents, also care whether an app is addictive and could lead to compulsive, excessive, or otherwise harmful use, particularly where such use immerses young people in content and interactions that can lead to or worsen mental health concerns, disordered eating, and other concerning behaviors.

³⁹ While the State need not establish harm to consumers under the DTPA, harm may be used in the calculation of penalties.

142. Parents also care about safety and parental-control features and tools. Parents who seek to use these controls expect them to do what Snap says they will do—help them keep their children safe on Snapchat.

V. Snap Violates the SCOPE Act.

143. According to Snap, it collects several types of personal identifying information and data about Snapchat users, including their name, date of birth, username, email address, phone number, physical address, “general” location, device information (e.g., IP address, mobile carrier, device model, device system, network type, device IDs, app and file names and types, battery level, audio settings and connected audio devices), profile picture, phone and social media contacts, user content (e.g., snaps, stories, profile information) and the associated metadata (e.g., the date and time the content was posted and who viewed it), and payment card numbers or other third-party payment information.⁴⁰

144. In addition, according to Snap, it shares Snapchat users’ personal identifying information and data with third parties, such as “content partners” and “advertisers,” for a variety of reasons, including “personalizing and measuring the effectiveness of advertising,” “provid[ing] more valuable advertising offerings that generate revenue,” “developing and improving its features, including through the use of algorithms and machine learning models for personalization and advertising,” and “understanding how Snap’s Services are working to inform their business decisions.”⁴¹ Consistent with these practices, Snap collects, processes, shares, and discloses the personal identifying information of known minors in the State of Texas.

⁴⁰ *Learn About How Snap Uses Data – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/6HHG-5Z8P>.

⁴¹ *Learn About Snap’s Data Processing and How to Object – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/JE58-LWYG>.

145. Snap offers certain limited protections for users who have provided it with a date of birth indicating that they are between 13 and 17, but none of these comply with the SCOPE Act.

According to Snap, these limited protections for minors include:

- a. Setting their account to “private” by default, but permitting them to change their account to “public” at any time;
- b. Allowing them to “tag” each other in Snaps, Stories, or Spotlight Videos only if they are already friends;
- c. Limiting access to Public Profiles to “older teens (ages 16-17)” and limiting the distribution of their “Public Stories” to their “friends or followers and to other Snapchatters with whom they share mutual friends.”⁴²

146. For users known to be 13 to 17 years old, Snap permits them to enroll in “Family Center,” which, according to Snap, is intended to “help[] parents get more insight into who their teens are friends with on Snapchat, and who they have been communicating with, while still respecting their teens’ privacy and autonomy.”⁴³ Family Center purports to provide parents with limited tools, such as the ability to monitor their location, usage, and conversations and “limit sensitive or suggestive content.”⁴⁴

⁴² *Additional Protections for Teens on Snapchat*, SNAP VALUES, <https://perma.cc/6V22-ZQGC>.

⁴³ *What is Family Center? – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/LU8C-RA69>.

⁴⁴ *How do I restrict content for my teen in Family Center? – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/KFU2-S8VE>; *What is Family Center?*, *supra*, n.42; *How do I get visibility into my teen’s location through Family Center? – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/NH8J-62LY>; *How do I see how my teen spends their time on Snapchat? – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/7WD8-P5DM>; *How do I view my teen’s recent conversations in Family Center? – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/9CBU-WXFH>.

147. To access and use the limited Family Center tools, Snap require a known minor’s parent or guardian to create their own Snapchat account, invite the known minor to join Family Center, and have their request accepted by the known minor.⁴⁵

148. However, Snap does not provide the parents or guardians of users known to be 13 to 17 years old with parental tools that allow them to control or limit most of a known minor’s privacy and account settings. For example, parents or guardians do not have the ability to control Snap’s sharing, disclosing, and selling of a known minor’s personal identifying information.

CAUSES OF ACTION

149. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

150. The Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act (DTPA) prohibits “[f]alse, misleading, or deceptive acts or practices in the conduct of any trade or commerce.” TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. § 17.46(a).

151. Such unlawful acts or practices include representing that a good or service has “characteristics . . . which [it] do[es] not have,” *id.* § 17.46(b)(5), or that it is “of a particular standard, quality, or grade” when it is “of another,” *id.* § 17.46(b)(7). “[A]dvertising goods or services with intent not to sell them as advertised,” *id.* § 17.46(b)(9), is also prohibited. Finally, it is unlawful to “fail[]to disclose information concerning goods or services which was known at the time of the transaction if such failure to disclose such information was intended to induce the consumer into a transaction into which the consumer would not have entered had the information been disclosed” *Id.* § 17.46(b)(24).

⁴⁵ *How do I add my teen to Family Center? – Snapchat Support*, SNAP, <https://perma.cc/BB7H-9B94>.

152. Snap is a “[p]erson,” and the Snapchat app is a “[s]ervice[]” as defined by the DTPA. *Id.* §§ 17.45(3), (2). By offering the Snapchat app to Texans on multiple platforms, Defendant is engaged in “the conduct of any trade or commerce.” *Id.* §§ 17.45(6), 17.46(a).

153. Upon information and belief, consumers in Texas, including Collin County, use Snapchat.

154. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in “[f]alse, misleading, or deceptive acts or practices,” in multiple ways, as described in the counts below.

155. The Securing Children Online through Parental Empowerment (“SCOPE”) Act requires “digital service providers,” like Snap, to implement specific safety and privacy features to protect users under the age of 18. Snap has violated the SCOPE Act, including Sections 509.052, 509.101, and 509.054.

156. Pursuant to Section 509.151 of the SCOPE Act, a violation of the SCOPE Act is a deceptive act or practice actionable by the Attorney General under the DTPA.

157. The State is entitled to a permanent injunction prohibiting Snap from continuing to engage in the unlawful acts and practices alleged in this Petition. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. § 17.47(a).

158. The State is also entitled to civil penalties of not more than \$10,000 per violation of the DTPA. *Id.* § 17.47(c)(1).

Count I
Deceptive Trade Practices Act
Tex. Bus. & Com. Code Ann. § 17.41 *et seq.*
Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug References

159. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

160. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in false, misleading, and deceptive acts and practices in its representations and advertisements regarding the content available on Snapchat. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. §§ 17.46(a), (b)(5), (b)(7), (b)(9).

161. Snap inaccurately and deceptively reports to the Apple App Store that the Snapchat platform contains either “none,” “infrequent/mild,” or “infrequent” “Alcohol, Tobacco, or Drug Use or References.” Snap knows when making this misrepresentation that it will also appear on Snapchat’s page on the App Store for consumers to see when deciding whether to download Snapchat (or permit minors in their care to do so). These deceptive representations allowed Snap to select and advertise a 12+ age rating for the Snapchat app under the prior age-rating system, and to select and advertise a 13+ age rating for the Snapchat app under the new age-rating system. Snap advertises the app’s 12+ or 13+ rating to consumers in other public statements.

162. However, such content is abundant on Snapchat and cannot reasonably be considered either “infrequent” or “mild.” This content includes alcohol-, tobacco-, and drug-related material that Snap deliberately permits and has permitted.

163. The Snapchat app does not have the characteristics of, and does not meet the appropriate standard for, an app with “infrequent/mild” or “infrequent” “alcohol, tobacco, or drug use or references.” Snap knows this, and it intends not to offer the app consistent with the way it is advertised.

164. Snap’s misleading and deceptive practices are highly relevant to the decisions of users to download Snapchat and the decisions of parents to let minors use Snapchat, because Snapchat users and their parents care about the type of content available on Snapchat when deciding whether to use, or to let minors use, the Snapchat app.

Count II
Deceptive Trade Practices Act
Tex. Bus. & Com. Code Ann. § 17.41 *et seq.*
Sexual Content and Nudity

165. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

166. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in false, misleading, and deceptive acts and practices in its representations and advertisements regarding the content available on Snapchat. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. §§ 17.46(a), (b)(5), (b)(7), (b)(9).

167. Snap inaccurately and deceptively reports to the Apple App Store that the Snapchat platform contains only “infrequent/mild” or “infrequent” “Sexual Content or Nudity.” Snap knows when making this misrepresentation that it will also appear on Snapchat’s page on the App Store for consumers to see when deciding whether to download Snapchat (or permit minors in their care to do so). Snap also advertises the app’s “12+” or “13+” rating to consumers in other public statements.

168. Contrary to Snap’s representations, sexual content is abundant on Snapchat and cannot reasonably be considered either “infrequent” or “mild.” This content includes mature sexual content Snap deliberately permits and has permitted on the app.

169. The Snapchat app does not have the characteristics of, and does not meet the appropriate standard for, an app with “infrequent/mild” or “infrequent” “sexual content or nudity.” Snap know this, and it intends not to offer the app consistent with the way it is advertised.

170. Snap’s misleading and deceptive practices are highly relevant to the decisions of users to download Snapchat and the decisions of parents to let minors use Snapchat, because Snapchat users and their parents care about the type of content available on Snapchat when deciding whether to use, or to let minors use, the Snapchat app.

Count III
Deceptive Trade Practices Act
Tex. Bus. & Com. Code Ann. § 17.41 *et seq.*
Mature/Suggestive Themes

171. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

172. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in false, misleading, and deceptive acts and practices in their representations and advertisements regarding the content available on Snapchat. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. §§ 17.46(a), (b)(5), (b)(7), (b)(9).

173. Snap inaccurately and deceptively reports to the Apple App Store that the Snapchat platform contains only “infrequent/mild” “Mature/Suggestive Themes” or “infrequent” “Mature or Suggestive Themes.” Snap knows when making this misrepresentation that it will appear on Snapchat’s page on the App Store for consumers to see when deciding whether to download Snapchat (or permit minors in their care to do so).

174. However, mature and suggestive content is abundant on Snapchat and cannot reasonably be considered either “infrequent” or “mild.” This content includes mature and suggestive content Snap deliberately permits and has permitted on the app.

175. The Snapchat app does not have the characteristics of, and does not meet the appropriate standard for, an app with “infrequent/mild” “mature/suggestive themes” or “infrequent” “mature or suggestive themes.” Snap knows this, and it intends not to offer the app consistent with the way it is advertised.

176. Snap’s misleading and deceptive practices are highly relevant to the decisions of users to download Snapchat and the decisions of parents to let minors use Snapchat, because Snapchat users and their parents care about the type of content available on Snapchat when deciding whether to use, or to let minors use, the Snapchat app.

Count IV
Deceptive Trade Practices Act
Tex. Bus. & Com. Code Ann. § 17.41 *et seq.*
Profanity or Crude Humor

177. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

178. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in false, misleading, and deceptive acts and practices in its representations and advertisements regarding the content available on Snapchat. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. §§ 17.46(a), (b)(5), (b)(7), (b)(9).

179. Snap inaccurately and deceptively reports to the Apple App Store that the Snapchat platform contains only “infrequent/mild” or “infrequent” “Profanity or Crude Humor.” Snap knows when making this misrepresentation that it will appear on Snapchat’s page on the App Store for consumers to see when deciding whether to download Snapchat (or permit minors in their care to do so).

180. However, such content is abundant on Snapchat and cannot reasonably be considered either “infrequent” or “mild.” Snap also deliberately permits, and has permitted, heavy profanity on the app, without restricting it to adults.

181. The Snapchat app does not have the characteristics of, and does not meet the appropriate standard for, an app with “infrequent/mild” or “infrequent” “profanity or crude humor.” Snap knows this, and it intends not to offer the app consistent with the way it is advertised.

182. Snap’s misleading and deceptive practices are highly relevant to the decisions of users to download Snapchat and the decisions of parents to let minors use Snapchat, because Snapchat users and their parents care about the type of content available on Snapchat when deciding whether to use, or to let minors use, the Snapchat app.

Count V
Deceptive Trade Practices Act
Tex. Bus. & Com. Code Ann. § 17.41 *et seq.*
Apple App Store Age Rating

183. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

184. Snap has engaged and is engaged or about to engage in false, misleading, and deceptive acts and practices in its representations and advertisements regarding the content available on Snapchat and its suitability for minors. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. §§ 17.46(a), (b)(5), (b)(7), (b)(9).

185. Snap inaccurately and deceptively reports to the Apple App Store that the Snapchat platform contains either “none,” “infrequent/mild,” or “infrequent” mature content, including “Alcohol, Tobacco, or Drug Use or References,” “Sexual Content or Nudity,” “Mature/Suggestive Themes,” “Mature or Suggestive Themes,” and “Profanity or Crude Humor.” Snap knows when making these misrepresentations that they will appear on Snapchat’s page on the App Store, along with a representation that Snapchat is rated “12+” or “13+,” for consumers to see when deciding whether to download Snapchat (or permit minors in their care to do so). Snap also advertises the 12+ or 13+ rating to consumers in other public statements.

186. Snap, however, has long deliberately permitted mature, adult-only content on Snapchat. This mature content is not “infrequent” or “mild.”

187. The Snapchat app does not have the characteristics of, and does not meet the appropriate standard for, an app with a “12+” or “13+” rating. Snap knows this, and it intends not to offer the app consistent with the way it is advertised.

188. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in “[f]alse, misleading, or deceptive acts or practices,” by selecting a 12+ rating in the Apple App Store when the app is not suitable for ages

12 and over, even though the App Store permits Snap to self-select the appropriate rating of 17+, and even though Snap permits and has permitted adult-only content on the Snapchat app that Snap knows is accessible to minors.

189. Snap has made public statements that overstate and otherwise misrepresent the safety of the Snapchat app for minor users, particularly as it relates to the abundant mature, adult-only content on the app. These statements also are a “[f]alse, misleading, [and] deceptive act[] or practice[] in the conduct of any trade or commerce.”

190. Snap’s misleading and deceptive practices are highly relevant to the decisions of users to download Snapchat and the decisions of parents to let minors use Snapchat, because Snapchat users and their parents care about the type of content available on Snapchat when deciding whether to use, or to let minors use, the Snapchat app.

Count VI
Deceptive Trade Practices Act
Tex. Bus. & Com. Code Ann. § 17.41 *et seq.*
T for Teen Rating

191. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

192. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in false, misleading, and deceptive acts and practices in its representations and advertisements regarding the content available on Snapchat and its suitability for minors. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. §§ 17.46(a), (b)(5), (b)(7), (b)(9).

193. Snap inaccurately and deceptively represents to the Google Play and Microsoft Stores that the Snapchat platform is appropriate for minors to obtain a “T” for “Teen” age rating. Snap knows that the false, deceptive, and misleading age rating of “T” for “Teen” appears on Snapchat’s pages on the Google Play Store for consumers to see when deciding whether to download Snapchat (or permit minors in their care to do so).

194. Snap, however, has long deliberately permitted mature, adult-only content on Snapchat.

195. The Snapchat app does not have the characteristics of, and does not meet the appropriate standard for, an app with a “T” for “Teen” rating. Snap knows this, and it intends not to offer the app consistent with the way it is advertised.

196. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in “[f]alse, misleading, or deceptive acts or practices,” by selecting a “T” for “Teen” rating in the Google Play and Microsoft Stores when the app is not suitable for minors, even though Snap permits and has permitted adult-only content on the Snapchat app that Snap knows is accessible to minors.

197. Snap has made public statements that overstate and otherwise misrepresent the safety of the Snapchat app for minor users, particularly as it relates to the abundant inappropriate, adult-only content on the app. These statements also are a “[f]alse, misleading, [and] deceptive act[] or practice[] in the conduct of any trade or commerce.”

198. Snap’s misleading and deceptive practices are highly relevant to the decisions of users to download Snapchat and the decisions of parents to let minors use Snapchat, because Snapchat users and their parents care about the type of content available on Snapchat when deciding whether to use, or to let minors use, the Snapchat app.

Count VII
Deceptive Trade Practices Act
Tex. Bus. & Com. Code Ann. § 17.41 *et seq.*
Cumulative Deceptive Representations

199. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

200. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in false, misleading, and deceptive acts and practices in its representations and advertisements regarding the content available on Snapchat and its suitability for minors. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. §§ 17.46(a), (b)(5), (b)(7), (b)(9).

201. Snap inaccurately and deceptively reports to the Apple App Store that the Snapchat platform contains either “none,” “infrequent/mild,” or “infrequent” mature content, including “Alcohol, Tobacco, or Drug Use or References,” “Sexual Content or Nudity,” “Mature/Suggestive Themes,” “Mature or Suggestive Themes,” and “Profanity or Crude Humor.” Snap knows when making these misrepresentations that they will appear on Snapchat’s page on the App Store, along with a representation that Snapchat is rated “12+” or “13+” for consumers to see when deciding whether to download Snapchat (or permit minors in their care to do so). Snap also advertises the 12+ or 13+ rating to consumers in other public statements.

202. Snap inaccurately and deceptively represents to the Google Play and Microsoft Stores that the Snapchat platform is appropriate for minors to obtain a “T” for “Teen” age rating. Snap knows the false, deceptive, and misleading age rating of “T” for “Teen” appears on Snapchat’s pages on the Google Play Store for consumers to see when deciding whether to download Snapchat (or permit minors in their care to do so).

203. Snap has long deliberately permitted mature, adult-only content on Snapchat. The mature content on Snapchat is not “infrequent” or “mild.”

204. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in “[f]alse, misleading, or deceptive acts or practices,” by selecting and advertising a 12+ or 13+ rating in the Apple App Store, even though the App Store previously permitted Snap to self-select the appropriate rating of 17+ and now permits Snap to self-select an age rating of either 16+ or the appropriate rating of 18+. Snap has

engaged in and is engaging in “[f]alse, misleading, or deceptive acts or practices,” by selecting and advertising a “T” for “Teen” rating in the Google Play and Microsoft Stores.

205. The Snapchat app does not have the characteristics of, and does not meet the appropriate standard for, an app with “infrequent/mild” or “infrequent” mature content, or an age rating of “12+,” “13+,” or “T” for “Teen.” Snap knows this, and it intends not to offer the app consistent with the way it is advertised.

206. Snap has made public statements that overstate and otherwise misrepresent the safety of the Snapchat app for minor users, particularly as it relates to the abundant inappropriate, adult-only content on the app. These statements are a “[f]alse, misleading, [and] deceptive act[] or practice[] in the conduct of any trade or commerce.”

207. Each of these representations are false, misleading, and deceptive on their own, and also cumulatively.

208. Snap’s misleading and deceptive practices are highly relevant to the decisions of users to download Snapchat and the decisions of parents to let minors use Snapchat, because Snapchat users and their parents care about the type of content available on Snapchat when deciding whether to use, or to let minors use, the Snapchat app.

Count VIII
Deceptive Trade Practices Act
Tex. Bus. & Com. Code Ann. § 17.41 *et seq.*
Failure to Disclose Information Concerning Goods or Services

209. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

210. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in false, misleading, and deceptive acts and practices by failing to disclose information about the content available on Snapchat and its

suitability for minors, to induce users to download and use Snapchat or allow minors in their care to do so. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. § 17.46(a), (b)(24).

211. Snap has inaccurately and deceptively omitted highly relevant facts to the Apple App Store about the content available on the Snapchat app to enable Snap to select and advertise a 12+ or 13+ age rating. Specifically, Snap has failed to disclose that the Snapchat platform contains abundant “Alcohol, Tobacco, or Drug Use or References,” “Sexual Content and Nudity,” “Suggestive or Mature Themes,” and “Profanity or Crude Humor,” (collectively “Explicit Adult Content”), that this Explicit Adult Content is neither “infrequent” nor “mild,” and that in some cases Snap permits or promotes content of these various types. These omissions allowed Snap to select and advertise a 12+ age rating for the Snapchat app under the prior age-rating system, knowing that the 12+ age rating and the associated “infrequent/mild” mature content descriptors would appear to consumers on Snapchat’s Apple App Store page, and to select and advertise a 13+ age rating for the Snapchat app under the new age-rating system, knowing that the 13+ age rating and the associated “infrequent” mature content descriptors would appear to consumers on Snapchat’s Apple App Store page. Snap also failed to inform consumers about the Explicit Adult Content available on Snapchat when it advertised the app’s 12+ or 13+ age rating to consumers in other public statements.

212. Snap has inaccurately and deceptively omitted highly relevant facts to the Google Play Store and Microsoft Store about the content available on the Snapchat app to enable Snap to select and advertise a “T” for “Teen” age rating. Snap failed to disclose that Snapchat contains abundant Explicit Adult Content and that Snap deliberately permits and has permitted such content. Snap also failed to inform consumers about the Explicit Adult Content available on

Snapchat when it advertised the app’s “T” for “Teen” age rating to consumers in other public statements.

213. Snap has made other public statements about the safety of the Snapchat application for young users without disclosing the nature and extent of Explicit Adult Content on Snapchat. These statements also are a “deceptive act[] or practice[] in the conduct of any trade or commerce.”

214. Snap either knew of the extent of Explicit Adult Content on the Snapchat platform when it self-reported to the App Store, Google Store, and Microsoft Store, and when it otherwise advertised the app’s age rating or safety to consumers, or Snap became aware of the extent of Explicit Adult Content and failed to amend these statements and representations.

215. Snap’s deceptive practices are highly relevant to the decisions of users to download Snapchat and the decisions of parents to let minors use Snapchat, and were intended to induce these behaviors, because Snapchat users and parents care about the type of content available on Snapchat when deciding whether to use, or let minors use, Snapchat. Had Texas consumers, particularly Texas parents, known the true nature and extent of mature, adult content on Snapchat, they would not have downloaded the app or permitted minors to do so.

Count IX
Deceptive Trade Practices Act
Tex. Bus. & Com. Code Ann. § 17.41 *et seq.*
Omission of Addictiveness and Other Mental Health Problems

216. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

217. Snap has engaged in and is engaging in false, misleading, and deceptive acts and practices by failing to disclose that the Snapchat app is addictive and contributes to compulsive or excessive use especially for minors, to induce users to download and use Snapchat or allow minors in their care to do so. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. § 17.46(a), (b)(24).

218. Snap deliberately designed Snapchat to be addictive and knows that it causes a range of mental health problems in users. It employs numerous coercive and addictive features that draw users, especially minors, to the app and keep them on the app as long as possible to increase Snap's revenue and profits at the expense of the well-being of users.

219. Snap knows that minor users especially are susceptible to Snapchat's addictive features. Each of those features discussed in this Petition manipulate and prey upon minor users' developing brains and inability to effectively self-regulate their app use. Snap knows that these features are excessive and compulsive.

220. Snap has not informed consumers at any time that Snapchat is addictive and causes a range of mental health problems, that it was designed to be addictive, or that minors are particularly susceptible to these features and qualities.

221. Snap's deceptive practices are highly relevant to the decisions of users to download Snapchat and the decisions of parents to let minors use Snapchat, and are intended to induce these behaviors, because Snapchat users and parents care whether the app is addictive. Had Texas consumers, particularly Texas parents, known the true nature and extent of Snapchat's addictive design, qualities, and features, they would not have downloaded the app or permitted minors in their care to do so.

Count X
SCOPE Act, Section 509.101
Failing to Use a Commercially Reasonable Method for
a Parent or Guardian to Verify Their Identity

222. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

223. The SCOPE Act defines a "[v]erified parent" as a "parent or guardian of a known minor whose identity and relationship to the minor have been verified by a digital service

provider.” TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. § 509.001(7). To establish that a person is a verified parent, Section 509.101 of the SCOPE Act requires that a digital service provider use a “commercially reasonable method” that verifies a parent or guardian’s identity and relationship to a known minor. Defendant fails to comply with its obligations in several ways.

224. Snap’s Family Center tool does not verify a parent or guardian’s identity and relationship to a known minor. Snap does not request, nor verify, any information related to a purported parent or guardian’s identity or relationship to a known minor.

225. Even if Snap verified a parent’s identity and relationship with a known minor, Snap’s Family Center would still not be commercially reasonable. Specifically, Snap’s Family Center gives a known minor sole discretion to accept or deny their parent or guardian access to the parental tools. Snap’s Family Center also unnecessarily requires a parent or guardian to create an account before being able to access or use the limited Family Center tools.

226. This violation of the SCOPE Act is a per se violation of Section 17.46(a) of the DTPA.

Count XI
SCOPE Act, Section 509.052⁴⁶
Unlawfully Sharing, Disclosing, and Selling Known Minors’
Personal Identifying Information

227. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

228. Section 509.052 of the SCOPE Act prohibits digital service providers from “shar[ing], disclos[ing], or sell[ing] [a] known minor’s personal identifying information” “[u]nless a verified parent provides otherwise.” TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE ANN. § 509.052. Snap violates the

⁴⁶ This Petition does not allege violations of Section 509.052(2)(D) of the SCOPE Act.

SCOPE Act by sharing, disclosing, and selling known minors' personal identifying information without obtaining permission from their verified parent.

229. Snap unlawfully shares, discloses, and sells known minors' personal identifying information to several third parties, such as business partners, including advertisers.

230. Snap also unlawfully shares and discloses known minors' personal identifying information to other Snapchat users. If a person uses Snapchat to search for the account of a known minor whose account is set to "private," Snap will share and disclose the known minor's personal identifying information, such as their name and username. If a person uses Snapchat to search for the account of a known minor whose account is set to "public," Snap will share and disclose the known minor's personal identifying information, such as their name, username, profile image, social media contacts, and user content.

231. This violation of the SCOPE Act is a per se violation of Section 17.46(a) of the DTPA.

Count XII
SCOPE Act, Section 509.054
Failing to Create and Provide Parental Tools
for the Accounts of Known Minors

232. The State repeats and incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

233. Section 509.054 of the SCOPE Act requires digital service providers to create and provide "parental tools" that allow a verified parent to "supervise the verified parent's known minor's use of a digital service." These tools must include, among other things, the ability for a verified parent to control or limit a known minor's privacy and account settings.

234. Snap fails to provide verified parents with the tools required by Section 509.054.

235. This violation of the SCOPE Act is a per se violation of Section 17.46(a) of the DTPA.

CIVIL PENALTIES

236. Texas incorporates the foregoing allegations as if set forth fully herein.

237. Texas is not required to allege injuries to bring claims seeking civil penalties under the DTPA. TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE § 17.47(a) (creating a cause of action “[w]henever the consumer protection division has reason to believe that any person is engaging in, has engaged in, or is about to engage in any act or practice declared to be unlawful by [the DTPA] ...”); *see e.g. Holzman v. State*, No. 13-11-00168-CV, 2013 WL 398935, at *3 (Tex. App.—Corpus Christi 2013, pet. denied) (“Moreover, it is not necessary for the State to allege any injury to a [consumer] to recover the civil penalties it seeks in its live petition.”); *see also Texas v. Colony Ridge, Inc.*, Civil Case No. CV-H-24-0941, 2024 WL 4553111, at *8 (S.D. Tex. 2024) (same).

238. Texas is entitled to recover up to \$10,000 for each violation of the DTPA. *See* TEX. BUS. & COM. CODE § 17.47(c)(1).

239. TEXAS BUS. & COM. CODE § 17.47(g) (emphasis added) provides that “In determining the amount of penalty imposed ... the trier of fact *shall consider*:

- (1) the seriousness of the violation, including the nature, circumstances, extent, and gravity of any prohibited act or practice;
- (2) the history of previous violations;
- (3) the amount necessary to deter future violations;
- (4) the economic effect on the person against whom the penalty is to be assessed;
- (5) knowledge of the illegality of the act or practice; and
- (6) any other matter that justice may require.

TRIAL BY JURY

240. The State demands a jury trial and tenders the appropriate fee with this petition.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

241. The State of Texas respectfully requests that the Court impose civil penalties on Snap pursuant to Section 17.47(c) of the DTPA, which authorizes the Office of the Texas Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division to request a civil penalty to be paid to the State of Texas in an amount of not more than \$10,000 per violation.

242. The State of Texas further respectfully requests the Court issue an order:

a. Declaring Snap's conduct as described herein to be in violation of the identified provisions of the DTPA and the SCOPE Act.

b. Permanently enjoining Snap, its agents, employees, and all other persons acting on its behalf, directly or indirectly, from further violating the DTPA by:

i. making false, deceptive, or misleading representations that the Snapchat app contains "infrequent/mild" mature content and is safe and appropriate for minors, and by continuing to claim and advertise a 12+ or 13+ age rating on the Apple App Store and a "T" for "Teen" rating on the Google Play and Microsoft Stores;

ii. making false, deceptive, or misleading representations about the addictive nature of the Snapchat app; and

iii. failing to disclose to consumers the abundant mature, inappropriate, and adult-only content on Snapchat.

c. Permanently enjoining any further violation of the identified provisions of the SCOPE Act by Snap.

243. The State of Texas further respectfully requests that the Court award the Office of the Texas Attorney General attorney's fees and costs of court pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 402.006(c).

244. Lastly, the State of Texas respectfully requests that the Court grant any other general, equitable, and/or further relief that this Court deems just and proper.

DATED: February 11, 2026

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Status as of 2/11/2026 9:50 AM CST

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