

June 1, 2026
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Subject: Children's Health & Welfare

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Governor Pritzker,

I am writing to you regarding HB5511, the Children's Social Media Safety Act. I am urging you to veto this bill-- it will not achieve what it is meant to, and may cause more harm upon the children it seeks to protect. It also can put small, open-source projects out of business and punish residents (such as myself) who operate home servers in our great state.

Allow me to explain how this bill could bring harm to children. First, you must assume that a website operator is acting in bad faith, or with malice, against children. The bill, HB5511, requires computing devices to broadcast a signal for users under the age of 13, between the ages of 13-16, and between 16 and 18. For people who intend to prey upon children, using that same broadcast signal would make it immensely easier to find children in Illinois to prey upon, especially if operating outside of Illinois, or the United States in general. This, in and of itself, should be enough to convince any rational human to vote against this bill.

This also could very easily punish residents like myself, who operate small web servers as a fun project in the state of Illinois. I, and many others, do not have the time or resources to implement whatever standardized API will be produced to comply with this law. My hosted website supports commenting, and therefore I could be found criminally liable in the state of Illinois. Many web server operators like me could fall into a similar legal liability, possibly without ever learning about this law.

My final argument is a more general plea. The fines that this law would allow Illinois to levy could put open-source (and not-for-profit) operating system providers out of business. In my opinions, this would be a massive blow to the world of computing at large. Open-source systems such as BSD and similar POSIX-compliant systems have helped pioneer technology that we take for granted today-- including the TCP/IP networking that enables the modern Internet. Punishing these small projects could very easily have massive ramifications on the future of technology, and is one that I do not believe many lawmakers have considered.

I understand that this message to you was long. I hope that you have taken the time to read and understand it, and I hope that you sincerely consider vetoing this bill. I also would like to hear your thoughts on this, if you decide to pass the bill into law. If my understanding of the bill was incorrect, I am eager to gain knowledge on it that I do not currently have.

Your constituent,
Torben Massat