



By: TA | AP Brief

Insufficient support to ban children from using social media in New Zealand



New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon has unveiled a proposed law banning children younger than 16 from using social media platforms, citing what he said Monday was "harm being done to a generation" of young people.

However, the bill hasn't yet attracted enough support to pass into law because two of the three parties in Luxon's coalition government will vote against it.

Passage would require support from opposition lawmakers, who have yet to decide how they would vote.

There also wasn't enough time for lawmakers to hold a vote on the proposal before Parliament dissolved on Oct. 1 ahead of **November's election**, Luxon said.

Bills are required to pass three rounds of voting, usually over a period of months, before they become law.

If reelected, Luxon is seeking to make his government the **latest worldwide** to enact age restrictions for social media platforms after dozens of countries have either introduced or are mulling such measures.

He said 2025 research showed a third of New Zealand teenagers spent at least five hours a day on social media.

"Social media is exposing them to harmful content, addictive technology and pressures they are not equipped to deal with and it's affecting their family life, mental health, sleep, and education," Luxon said.

The proposal would require social media platforms including Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and Facebook, to "take reasonable steps" to check users were older than 16, according to material supplied by Luxon's party Monday.

This could include "existing account information, facial age estimation, digital ID services and formal ID," the material said.

Excluded from the proposed law are messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, online gaming platforms like Roblox and AI apps with productivity uses — including ChatGPT, Gemini and Copilot.

No penalties are proposed for parents or children, but tech firms could be fined up to 10% of their global revenue for failing to meet their obligations. Platforms regularly used by children would be required to assess and report on the risks their networks posed, Luxon said.

Prospect of a ban has divided New Zealand's government

Luxon's government has mulled such a law since Australia's **world-first social media ban** for under 16-year-olds took effect in December 2025.

However, it's been vehemently opposed by the other two parties that make up the government along with Luxon's center-right group National — libertarian ACT and populist NZ First.

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Both minor parties repeated Monday their plans to vote against the law. Lawmakers from the largest opposition party, center-left Labour, haven't decided if they'd vote for it, leader Chris Hipkins said Monday.

Since Australia's law came into force, countries including Canada, Brazil and Indonesia have enacted bans too, while many other countries are studying or developing laws.

Child safety advocates and some parents have welcomed age restrictions, while privacy groups say the rules can be cheated and that forcing users to supply identification raises privacy concerns.

In January, a month after Australia's ban was enacted, **social media platforms** told an Australian regulator they had revoked access to about 4.7 million accounts identified as belonging to children.

Luxon's government enacted a ban in 2024 on the use of cellphones during the school day for students of all ages.