

Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news and updates. You can disable anytime.

Later

Subscribe



■ LEGISLATURE

House committee punts votes on social media, joint custody regulations

Committee members questioned proposed regulations aimed at controlling minors' social media use and earnings, leading the chair to postpone all scheduled bill votes.

By **WESLEY WALTER** Published on February 5, 2026 at 8:20 am CST



STOCK



Listen to this article.



n Alabama House committee delayed votes to advance all bills

ADVERTISEMENT



TRENDING

scheduled for
on Wednesday

The House
Advocacy C

review four

Representative

Sylacauga, which would regulate
minors' conduct on social media and
age ratings for video games.

Robbins argued the necessity of the
bills, pointing to the uptick in reports of
anxiety and depression among young
people since the emergence of social
media.

"Some studies show as high as one in
three children have anxiety or
depression, or the low end is one in five.
If you go to 2000, it was only one in ten.
Anxiety and depression rates were
below ten percent 26 years ago," the
representative said.



Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news
and updates. You can disable anytime.

nce gains,
ve

e appeal

and gun

Jerry Carl announces additional campaign
endorsements

Can Shomari Figures win reelection after
redistricting?

ADVERTISEMENT



**Sign
new**



Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news and updates. You can disable anytime.

You can
Scoop—
things Al
Weekly Roundup.

YOUR EM/

SUBSCRIBE

By clicking subscribe, you agree to our *privacy policy*. You can unsubscribe at any time.

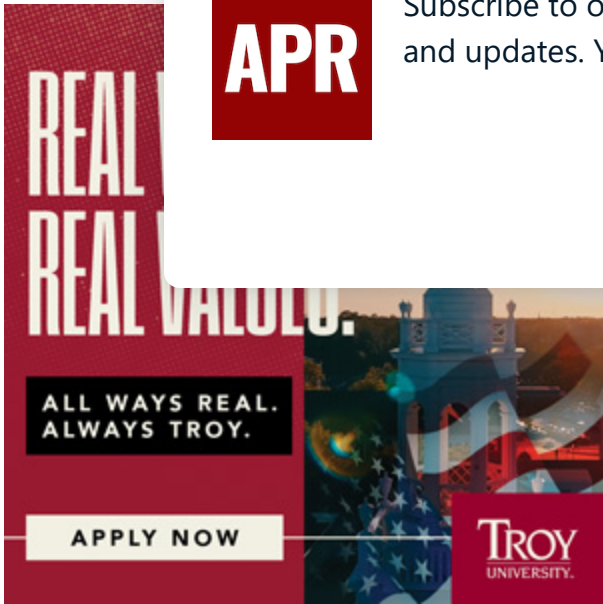
“There was something that happened to society shortly thereafter, and you can see it when you look ten years ago, and you look at it today—and that is the explosion of technology that is in your pocket that allows you to connect to the world. It allows you to look on social media platforms at people all over the world that are living ‘quote’ a better life than you,” Robbins said.

House Bill 170 would require parents or guardians of minors who earn more than \$20,000 per year through social media to establish a trust for handling their earnings.

Parents or guardians would be allowed to serve as the trustee of the trust. If the trust’s average monthly balance exceeds \$250,000, the parent or guardian must petition the court to be appointed as the trustee.



Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news and updates. You can disable anytime.



REAL REAL VALUED.

ALL WAYS REAL.
ALWAYS TROY.

APPLY NOW

TROY
UNIVERSITY

Funds may be drawn from the trust by trustees to provide for medical or educational services for the minor, and once the minor turns 18, they would have full access to the money they earned.

“What we don’t want in the state of Alabama is we do not want, for lack of a better word, deadbeat parents putting their kids out there to make money as influencers so they can live off their money,” Robbins said, describing the purpose of his bill.

Committee members questioned Robbins regarding the necessity and specifications of his legislation.

“This is a ve
almost Big
many actual
Alabama th
category rig
Representa
Hills.



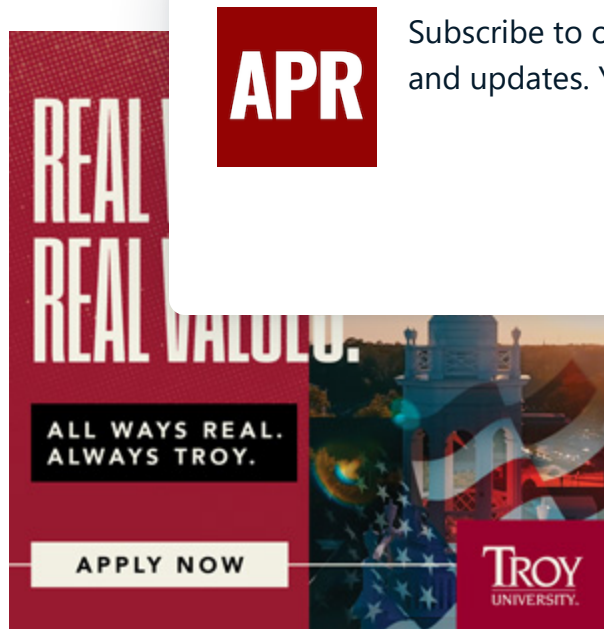
Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news and updates. You can disable anytime.

Robbins responded that he was unaware of any current state data on the number of children in Alabama who have social media presences that would fall under the scope of the bill.

Carns added that he felt the legislation would be difficult to implement, pointing to the process of implementing Alabama’s 2024 law requiring online distributors of sexual content to adopt age-verification software.

“It took us a long time to get that kinda set in place and everybody to understand it. This is four times, five times more complicated than that,” Carns said. “I’m just gonna need some time to kinda stew in this, so to speak.”

ADVERTISEMENT

**APR**

Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news and updates. You can disable anytime.

Representative Barbara Drummond, D-Mobile, expressed concern that the bill would restrict parents' control over their children's activities.

"It's taking away that control, and it is a solution in search of a problem here in the state of Alabama. That's what it appears [as]," the representative said of Robbins' bill.

Committee chair Representative Ginny Shaver, R-Leesburg, moved to withhold votes on all Robbins' bills after committee members Representative Barbara Boyd, D-Anniston, and Representative Tim Wadsworth, R-Arley, Carns and Drummond left the meeting room.

“We, obviously, and we have just gonna... Shaver said



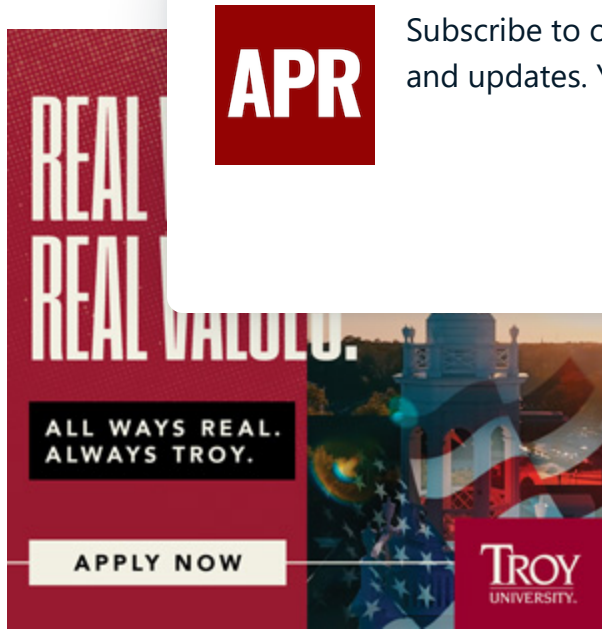
Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news and updates. You can disable anytime.

“I appreciate up so much... appreciate the opportunity to have these bills heard,” Robbins said. “I think it’s the most prescient issue of our time right now.”

Other bills brought before the committee by Robbins included HB171, which would restrict social media companies’ ability to allow minors to access content deemed “addictive” and authorize the Alabama attorney general to pursue legal action to ensure age verification requirements are instated for certain social media content, and HB174, which would require video games be given age ratings by the Entertainment Software Rating Board or similar organizations in order to be sold in Alabama.

HB174 would also provide that violating its statutes constitutes a violation of the state’s Deceptive Trade Practices Act.

ADVERTISEMENT

**APR**

Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news and updates. You can disable anytime.

HB173, sponsored by Robbins, would require social media platforms to verify a user's age and restrict notifications to minors without their guardian's consent between 9 p.m. and 8 a.m. The bill would also require social media platforms to provide "default settings" that would restrict minors from accessing the platform or receiving notifications after 9 p.m. unless authorized by a guardian.

A vote on HB19, sponsored by Representative Patrick Sellers, D-Birmingham, was also punted by Drummond, following questioning from the committee.

Sellers' bill would create a legal presumption that joint legal custody

and “frequent
and substantial
both parents
the child, ex
family violence



Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news and updates. You can disable anytime.

The bill would also require the court to “make specific findings” supporting a decision against joint custody being in a certain child’s best interest and remove legal provisions requiring that both parents submit a written agreement detailing certain matters relevant to the care and custody of their child in order to receive joint custody.

“Especially when a couple divorces, to be reduced to four days a month is really not fair to the child,” Sellers said. “The child needs both parents for their rearing and their raising.”

Drummond and Shaver expressed their worries that the bill would disrupt the current legal process for establishing joint custody by removing the provision requiring a detailed agreement be written.

“It seems to be like a one-size-fits-all kind of cookie-cutter approach and also takes away some of the judge’s discretion, it takes away the parents being able to work out, you know, if the parents can work something out, and that’s how it is now, I think that’s the

best approach
deletes that
law and put

APR

Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news and updates. You can disable anytime.

ADVERTISEMENT



“If I may speak for the whole committee, we think that you know both parents should take as much of [an] interest and time in raising the children, and that’s a goal, and I think a lack of that’s why we have a lot of problems today,” the chair continued. “I want to do anything we can to help that, you know, happen more often for parents to work together. But I do have a lot of questions that I would like to get addressed before we go forward.”

Sellers’ bill was carried over by Shaver to be reviewed by a subcommittee

headed by v
Tracy Estes
Representa
Guntersville



Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news and updates. You can disable anytime.

Have a question or a scoop?
Send us a tip. We'll track it

Wesley Walter



Wesley Walter is a reporter. You can reach him at wwalter@alreporter.com.

MORE FROM APR



Alabama 2026 Legislative Report: Sine die

By BETH LYONS



Gov. Ivey signs tax relief bill, state grocery tax eliminated for two months

By MARY CLAIRE
WOOTEN



Alabama Cannabis Coalition reflects on mixed results from legislative session

By ALEX JOBIN



Subscribe to our notifications for the latest news and updates. You can disable anytime.

Guard members, veterans

By ALEX JOBIN



ALABAMA POLITICAL REPORTER

[HOME](#) [STATE](#) [NATIONAL](#)

[ELECTIONS](#) [PODCAST](#)

[NEWSLETTER](#) [ABOUT](#)

[CONTACT US](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#)

Copyright © Alabama Political Reporter

