

In FOCUS: 5 Key Developments

1. California's "Right to Delete" Bill Becomes Law

California's SB1247 was signed into law Senate 38-0 on the 30th of September, 2026. The law allows adults who appeared in monetized family-vlogging content as minors to request that creators remove or edit content featuring them. It also provides a route to seek damages if a creator fails to comply. The law represents a significant expansion of existing child-influencer protections, because it moves the debate beyond earnings and towards privacy, addressing what happens to a child's digital footprint once they become an adult.

The debate around children's online safety is increasingly moving beyond age limits and platform access towards privacy and control over the content itself. Children featured in family content can accumulate years of publicly available material before they are old enough to understand the consequences. California's proposal seeks to give adults who were featured in monetized content as children greater control over what remains online, representing a broader shift towards giving children greater control over their digital identities.

Why it matters: A child's digital footprint can now be created by someone else long before they can meaningfully consent to it. California is now moving the debate from "Did the child get paid?" to "Who gets to decide what remains online?"

Source: [right-delete-legislation-social-media-child-performers-legislation-passes-senate-floor](#)

<https://pages.cs.wisc.edu/~srstephenso2/publications/chi24-sharenting.pdf>

<https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2722&context=jil>

2. The Child Influencer Debate is Moving Beyond Money

The first generation of child-influencer laws has largely focused on compensation: if a child's image or labour helps generate income, they

should receive a share of it. Newer proposals are increasingly addressing a second question: what happens to the content itself? California's Right to Delete in SB1247 is perhaps the clearest example, and other enacted laws such as Tennessee's law, SB1469, also give older minors a mechanism to seek removal of content.

Why it matters: The policy conversation is now widening beyond compensation to the question of who controls that record.

Source: [right-delete-legislation-social-media-child-performers-legislation-passes-senate-floor](#)

3. Tennessee Joins the Growing Number of Protective States

Tennessee's SB1469 took effect on the 1st of July 2026, introducing financial and privacy protections for children featured in monetized content. The law requires qualifying earnings to be placed into protected accounts. It also gives minors aged 14 and over a mechanism to request the removal of content featuring them. Tennessee is one of the latest in a long line of states adapting child-labour and privacy protections to the creator economy. We take a closer look at what the law does, and where its protections may fall short, in this edition's In Depth.

Why it matters: While helpful on their own, the growing number of state laws is creating an increasingly complex patchwork of protections, putting pressure on lawmakers to consider whether a national framework is needed.

Source: [https://eu.tennessean.com/story/entertainment/2026/04/14/tn-sets-limits-on-monetized-content-featuring-kids-what-to-know/89588100007/](#)

4. New Research Finds an Engagement Premium for Exploitative Content

A new study by Zijing Wei, Chao Peter Yang, and Xuanjie Chen, examining more than 5,000 videos across 79 kidfluencer channels found a relationship between indicators of exploitation and audience engagement. Researchers found that videos containing signals such as

[emotional bait, performative labour, and privacy violations](#) received substantially more views. The study also found that a one-unit increase in its [exploitation score](#) was associated with a 4.4-fold increase in views.

Why it matters: The findings raise a difficult question for the creator economy. If content that exposes or exploits children is also more likely to attract an audience, does the platform environment itself risk encouraging creators to produce more of it?

Source: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2606.03173>

5. The KIDS Act Brings Children's Online Safety to Congress

By a bipartisan vote of 267-117, the US House of Representatives passed the Kids Internet and Digital Safety Act (KIDS Act) on the 29th of June 2026. The bill brings together 14 proposals focused on strengthening protections for children online, including new requirements for social media platforms and safeguards for minors interacting with increasingly popular AI chatbots.

While the legislation is broader than the child influencer issue, its passage is significant for Quit Clicking Kids because it reflects a growing recognition in Washington that existing rules have struggled to keep pace with the way children interact with digital platforms.

Why it matters: The child-influencer debate is part of a much larger question about how far platforms, parents, and lawmakers should be responsible for protecting children online. The KIDS Act suggests that question is not only increasingly reaching the federal level, but also attracting support across the political aisle.

Source: <https://iapp.org/news/a/us-house-passes-the-kids-act>

<https://er.educause.edu/articles/2026/8/house-passes-kids-internet-and-digital-safety-act>

<https://www.commerce.senate.gov/press/rep/release/commerce-committee-advances-kids-online-safety-legislation/>

What We're Watching

The Next Wave of State Legislation

With Tennessee's SB1469 now in effect, and many more states such as California advancing their own child-influencer protections, the next test will be whether other states follow suit, and whether they choose to prioritize earnings, privacy, or both.

Platform Responsibility

Will YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok introduce stronger safeguards specifically addressing children featured in monetized family content, rather than treating them solely as users of the platforms?

The Push for a National Standard

As states continue developing their own rules and regulations, watch for renewed debate over whether children's rights should depend on the state they live in. The United States has traditionally left many areas of child protection to individual states, but the digital world does not stop at state lines. A national standard could provide children protections while avoiding the increasingly fragmented patchwork of state laws.

In DEPTH: Inside Tennessee's New Child Influencer Law

By Liesel Vorhaus

On the 1st of July, Tennessee became one of a growing number of states to introduce legal protections for children featured in monetized online content. Signed into law by Governor Bill Lee on the 16th of April, with overwhelming bipartisan support (passing the House 92-0 and the Senate 29-2), SB1469 requires parents, guardians, and other content creators to place a portion of a child's earnings into a protected trust account. It also gives minors aged 14 and over the right to request the permanent removal of content featuring them once they reach adulthood.

The legislation reflects a growing recognition that existing child labour protections have struggled to keep pace with the rise of the creator economy. One of the bill's sponsors, Senator Page Walley (R-Bolivar), highlighted the need for reform during debate, stating: ["We are seeing situations where minors are central to content that generates significant income, yet there are few clear safeguards to ensure their well-being or fair compensation"](#). His comments point to a relatively simple problem. **Children featured in monetized social media content can be central to the revenue a creator generates, while lacking many of the protections traditionally afforded to child performers in film and television.**

This issue is particularly relevant in Tennessee. According to reporting by [The Tennessean](#), using data from [Casino.org](#), the state ranks fourth in the US for Instagram influencers per capita, behind Washington D.C., California, and New York. Its growing creator economy makes Tennessee a significant test case. It may be used to see whether legislation designed for traditional child performers can be adapted to an industry in which the workplace may be the family home, the employer may be a parent, and the audience may be in the billions.

Tennessee now joins a growing number of states, including California, Illinois, Minnesota, and Utah in codifying legislation aimed at protecting

children involved in monetized online content. While the details vary between states, the emerging legislative approach has generally centered on two key concerns: money and privacy. Children who help generate income should be entitled to a share of that income, while children whose lives are documented online should have some ability to determine what remains publicly accessible.

For those interested in the wider issues surrounding the legislation, I recommend an analysis by [The Institute to Address Commercial Sexual Exploitation](#). The Institute examines the rapid growth of the “family vlogging” and “kidfluencer” economy, in which children can become the central attraction in content generating revenue through sponsorships, advertising, and platform monetization.

The Institute also refers back to the long historical context, arguing that family vlogging represents the latest iteration of a problem that has existed within the entertainment industry for decades. The exploitation of child performers long predates influencer culture, with actress Brooke Shields becoming one of the most prominent advocates highlighting the lasting consequences of growing up in the public eye.

Child performers have long been vulnerable to financial exploitation, overexposure, and a lack of control over their public image. The distinction is that traditional entertainment has developed at least some legal structures around child performers. Social media content creation often takes place within the private sphere of the family, where those same boundaries can be far less clear. A parent may simultaneously be a child’s guardian, employer, manager, and content creator. **The financial and personal interests of the adult and child are therefore not always neatly aligned.**

Perhaps the most significant question raised by Tennessee’s SB1469, however, is whether creating a right is enough to make that right meaningful. The law allows minors aged 14 and over to request the removal of content featuring them. If a parent or guardian refuses to comply, the young person may ultimately have to pursue civil litigation. That creates a considerable practical obstacle.

Legal proceedings are expensive, time-consuming, and emotionally taxing under any circumstances, but exponentially more so when the

person seeking to enforce the right is a teenager or newly turned adult challenging the parent or guardian responsible for publishing the content.

This creates a tension as **SB1469 gives children a legal right, but the harder question is whether they can actually use it.** The legislation represents an important acknowledgement that children featured in monetized social media content are entitled to rights of their own, rather than simply being subjects of their parents' online activity and commercial interests. However, the effectiveness of those rights will depend on whether the children concerned can realistically exercise them.

Tennessee's law is consequently a notable milestone, but not necessarily the final answer. As more states attempt to regulate the child influencer economy, the next question for lawmakers will be whether these protections can move beyond recognizing children's rights on paper and provide them with the practical means of exercising those rights in the real world.

Sources:

<https://cseinstitute.org/tennessees-new-law-highlights-child-exploitation-in-a-new-form-social-media-influencing/>

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<https://www.casino.org/blog/states-most-instagram-influencers/>

<https://thelynchburgtimes.com/tn-enacts-new-kidfluencer-law-to-protect-kids-online/>

<https://www.actionnews5.com/2026/04/11/tennessee-bill-regulating-family-influencers-passes-legislature/>