

COURT DENIES SOCIAL MEDIA GIANTS' APPEAL IN YOUTH ADDICTION CASE

Appellate Court Denies Social Media Defendants' Efforts to Avoid Trial in Social Media Personal Injury Litigation.

Montgomery, AL (December 10, 2024) - Beasley Allen is pleased to announce that a panel of appellate judges in California has denied an interlocutory appeal brought by social media companies that sought to avoid facing trials for youth social media addiction claims. In a December 6 order, the Second Appellate District indicated that it had read and considered the parties' briefs and denied the petition for review filed by Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube.

In October 2023, the trial court in the Social Media Judicial Council Coordinated Proceedings (JCCP) based in Los Angeles Superior Court ruled that Plaintiffs' negligence and fraud claims against the social media companies could proceed. Judge Carolyn Kuhl's ruling stated that: "Plaintiffs here allege that the effect of defendants' algorithms and operational features on plaintiffs' frequency and intensity of use of the social media site was not only foreseeable but was in fact intended. And plaintiffs allege that defendants were on notice through their own research and independent medical studies that this intended frequency and intensity of use of defendants' platforms risked adverse health effects for the minor users."

Defendants sought appellate review of the decision of Judge Kuhl's decision on the issues of whether social media addiction claims are barred by Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act or by the First Amendment. In Defendants' appellate brief, they argued that "the stakes of this litigation are high, the legal issues are substantial" and they urged the appellate court to intervene before the case goes to trial.

The appellate court summarily denied Defendants' petition, putting Plaintiffs one step closer to trials seeking to hold the tech giants liable for the mental physical harm suffered by youth as a result of social media addiction. Plaintiffs seek compensation for the alleged harmful health effects of their addiction to the social media platforms, including addiction, depression, anxiety, insomnia, eating disorders, self-harm, and suicide. The first trials are expected in late 2025.

The Social Media JCCP in Los Angeles is the largest personal injury litigation in the country against the tech giants, consisting of more than 1,900 cases filed by plaintiffs from 44 different states.

Plaintiffs in the JCCP are represented by Joseph VanZandt of Beasley Allen, Emily Jeffcott of Morgan & Morgan, Mariana McConnell of Kiesel Law, Rachel Lanier of Lanier Law Firm, and Brian Panish and Rahul Ravipudi of Panish Shea Ravipudi.

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