



Legislation Text

File #: 0161X-2020, **Version:** 1

To recognize the connection between increased social media use and the potential detrimental effects on mental health

WHEREAS, social media, which is defined by Merriam-Webster as forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos), has become a large part of American life with the Pew Research Institute estimating that 72% of the American public use some type of social media as of February 2019; and

WHEREAS, a Harris Poll conducted between May 1-3 found 51% of total respondents - 60% of those ages 18 to 34, 64% of those ages 35 to 49, and 34% of those ages 65 and up - reported increased usage on certain social media platforms during the Covid-19 pandemic as social distancing and stay at home orders confined American residents to their homes; and

WHEREAS, a study conducted by researchers at Pennsylvania State University and Jinan University in Guangzhou, China and published in August 2020 suggested that excessive social media use during the pandemic is a predictor of symptoms of depression and secondary trauma with more than half of participants, none of whom reported any traumatic or depressive disorders before the pandemic, experiencing some level of depression; and

WHEREAS, Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center surveyed 2,000 people nationally to find how social media use was altered since the onset of Covid-19, and found that many participants cited stress from the global COVID-19 pandemic, along with the movement to end racial inequality and other political issues in our country as reasons for taking a social media break; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ken Yeager, director of the Stress, Trauma and Resilience (STAR) Program at Ohio State Wexner Medical Center recommended reconnecting with family and friends, creating positive change in your community, using your voice, and talking about what is important provided the following recommendations based on the previously mentioned study; and

WHEREAS, the members of Columbus City Council recognizes that poor mental health outcomes can have detrimental effects on the quality of life of Columbus resident and encourages residents to contact their primary health care providers and Netcare Access if a resident is going through a mental health crisis; and

WHEREAS, this Council urges every sector of our society to look at ways to assist Columbus residents who are going through a mental health crisis with the understanding that social media can exacerbate a crisis, now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

That this Council recognizes the connection between increased social media use and the potential detrimental effects on mental health and is resolved to look at methods to increase the mental health of Columbus residents.