

Representative Angela Romero proposes the following substitute bill:

ONLINE DATING SAFETY AMENDMENTS

2023 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Angela Romero

Senate Sponsor: Wayne A. Harper

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill concerns online dating service safety requirements.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ defines terms;
- ▶ requires certain safety notifications and disclosures by an online dating service provider;
- ▶ provides enforcement procedures and a penalty for a violation of the notifications and disclosures; and
- ▶ makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

13-2-1 (Effective 12/31/23), as last amended by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapters 201, 462

ENACTS:



- 26 [13-63-101](#), Utah Code Annotated 1953
- 27 [13-63-102](#), Utah Code Annotated 1953
- 28 [13-63-103](#), Utah Code Annotated 1953
- 29 [13-63-104](#), Utah Code Annotated 1953
- 30 [13-63-105](#), Utah Code Annotated 1953
- 31 [13-63-106](#), Utah Code Annotated 1953



33 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

34 Section 1. Section **13-2-1 (Effective 12/31/23)** is amended to read:

35 **13-2-1 (Effective 12/31/23). Consumer protection division established --**

36 **Functions.**

37 (1) There is established within the Department of Commerce the Division of Consumer
38 Protection.

39 (2) The division shall administer and enforce the following:

- 40 (a) Chapter 5, Unfair Practices Act;
- 41 (b) Chapter 10a, Music Licensing Practices Act;
- 42 (c) Chapter 11, Utah Consumer Sales Practices Act;
- 43 (d) Chapter 15, Business Opportunity Disclosure Act;
- 44 (e) Chapter 20, New Motor Vehicle Warranties Act;
- 45 (f) Chapter 21, Credit Services Organizations Act;
- 46 (g) Chapter 22, Charitable Solicitations Act;
- 47 (h) Chapter 23, Health Spa Services Protection Act;
- 48 (i) Chapter 25a, Telephone and Facsimile Solicitation Act;
- 49 (j) Chapter 26, Telephone Fraud Prevention Act;
- 50 (k) Chapter 28, Prize Notices Regulation Act;
- 51 (l) Chapter 32a, Pawnshop, Secondhand Merchandise, and Catalytic Converter
52 Transaction Information Act;
- 53 (m) Chapter 34, Utah Postsecondary Proprietary School Act;
- 54 (n) Chapter 34a, Utah Postsecondary School State Authorization Act;
- 55 (o) Chapter 41, Price Controls During Emergencies Act;
- 56 (p) Chapter 42, Uniform Debt-Management Services Act;

- 57 (q) Chapter 49, Immigration Consultants Registration Act;
- 58 (r) Chapter 51, Transportation Network Company Registration Act;
- 59 (s) Chapter 52, Residential Solar Energy Disclosure Act;
- 60 (t) Chapter 53, Residential, Vocational and Life Skills Program Act;
- 61 (u) Chapter 54, Ticket Website Sales Act;
- 62 (v) Chapter 56, Ticket Transferability Act;
- 63 (w) Chapter 57, Maintenance Funding Practices Act; [~~and~~]
- 64 (x) Chapter 61, Utah Consumer Privacy Act[-]; and
- 65 (y) Chapter 63, Online Dating Safety Act.

66 Section 2. Section 13-63-101 is enacted to read:

67 **CHAPTER 63. ONLINE DATING SAFETY ACT**

68 **13-63-101. Definitions.**

69 As used in this chapter:

70 (1) "Banned member" means a member whose account or profile is the subject of a
71 fraud ban.

72 (2) "Criminal background screening" means a name search for an individual's criminal
73 conviction and is conducted by searching:

74 (a) available and regularly updated government public record databases that in the
75 aggregate provide national coverage for criminal conviction records; or

76 (b) a regularly updated database with national coverage of criminal conviction records
77 and sexual offender registries maintained by a private vendor.

78 (3) (a) "Criminal conviction" means a conviction for a crime in this state, another state,
79 or under federal law.

80 (b) "Criminal conviction" includes an offense that would require registration under
81 Title 77, Chapter 41, Sex and Kidnap Offender Registry, or under a similar law in a different
82 jurisdiction.

83 (4) "Division" means the Division of Consumer Protection in the Department of
84 Commerce.

85 (5) "Fraud ban" means the expulsion of a member from an online dating service
86 because, in the judgment of the online dating service provider, there is a significant risk the
87 member will attempt to obtain money from another member through fraudulent means.

88 (6) "Member" means an individual who submits to an online dating service provider
89 the information required by the online dating service provider to access the online dating
90 service provider's online dating service.

91 (7) "Online dating service" means a product or service that is:

92 (a) conducted through a website or a mobile application; and

93 (b) primarily marketed and intended to offer a member access to dating or romantic
94 relationships with another member by arranging or facilitating the social introduction of
95 members.

96 (8) "Online dating service provider" means a person predominately engaged in the
97 business of offering an online dating service.

98 (9) "Utah member" means a member who provides a Utah billing address or zip code
99 when registering with an online dating service provider.

100 Section 3. Section **13-63-102** is enacted to read:

101 **13-63-102. Applicability of chapter.**

102 This chapter does not apply to an Internet service provider serving as an intermediary
103 for a transmission of an electronic message between members of an online dating service
104 provider.

105 Section 4. Section **13-63-103** is enacted to read:

106 **13-63-103. Criminal background screening disclosures.**

107 (1) An online dating service provider that offers services to residents of this state and
108 does not conduct a criminal background screening on each member shall, before permitting a
109 Utah member to communicate through the online dating service provider with another member,
110 clearly and conspicuously disclose to the Utah member that the online dating service provider
111 does not conduct a criminal background screening on each member.

112 (2) An online dating service provider that offers services to residents of this state and
113 conducts a criminal background screening on each member shall, before permitting a Utah
114 member to communicate through the provider with another member, clearly and
115 conspicuously:

116 (a) disclose to the Utah member that the online dating service provider conducts a
117 criminal background screening on each member; and

118 (b) include on the online dating service provider's website or mobile application:

119 (i) a statement of whether the online dating service provider excludes from the online
120 dating service provider's online dating service an individual who is identified as having a
121 criminal conviction; and

122 (ii) a statement that a criminal background screening:

123 (A) may be inaccurate or incomplete;

124 (B) may give a member a false sense of security; and

125 (C) may be circumvented by an individual who has a criminal history.

126 Section 5. Section **13-63-104** is enacted to read:

127 **13-63-104. Safety awareness disclosures.**

128 (1) An online dating service provider that offers services to residents of this state shall
129 clearly and conspicuously provide a safety awareness notification to all Utah members that
130 includes a list of safety measures reasonably designed to increase awareness of safer online
131 dating practices and clear guidelines and resources for reporting crimes committed by an online
132 dating service member.

133 (2) (a) A safety awareness notification described in Subsection (1) shall:

134 (i) have a heading or headings substantially similar to:

135 (A) "Online Dating Safety Awareness";

136 (B) "Protecting Yourself from Sexual Assault and Dating Violence"; and

137 (C) "Protecting Yourself from Financial Crimes"; and

138 (ii) include information relevant to member safety awareness, including the following
139 or substantially similar information, which may be revised or updated to reflect current
140 information and best safety practices:

141 (A) a notice that engaging in sexual conduct without the other person's consent is a
142 criminal act and subject to prosecution;

143 (B) an advisory that getting to know an individual through an online dating service may
144 be risky and a member should follow safety precautions when sharing information or meeting
145 in person;

146 (C) an advisory that a member should avoid sharing the member's last name, email
147 address, home address, phone number, place of work, social security number, details of the
148 member's daily routine, or other identifying information in the member's dating profile or
149 initial email messages or communications;

150 (D) an advisory that a member should stop communicating with an individual who
151 pressures the member for personal or financial information or attempts to trick the member into
152 revealing personal or financial information;

153 (E) an advisory that a member should not send money to an individual the member
154 meets on an online dating service, especially by wire transfer, even if the individual claims to
155 be experiencing an emergency;

156 (F) an advisory that if a member decides to meet another member in person, the
157 member should tell someone in the member's family or a friend where the member is going and
158 when the member is planning to return;

159 (G) an advisory that a member should provide the member's own transportation to and
160 from an in-person date and meet in a public place with many people around;

161 (H) an advisory that an individual may provide false information in a dating profile;

162 (I) a notice that a member should block and report to the online dating service a
163 member whose behavior is suspicious, offensive, harassing, threatening, fraudulent, or involves
164 a request for money or an attempt to sell a product or service;

165 (J) a request that if a member is the victim or survivor of sexual or intimate partner
166 violence or a financial crime through someone the member met on the online dating service,
167 the member should report the incident to the online dating service and to law enforcement;

168 (K) a notice that if a member is the victim or survivor of sexual or intimate partner
169 violence or a financial crime through someone the member met on the online dating service,
170 the member is not to blame and may seek support through national or local hotlines and
171 services; and

172 (L) an advisory that reporting criminal activity by another member may help prevent a
173 perpetrator of a rape, assault, or financial crime from hurting or continuing to hurt others, and
174 may be necessary for an online dating service to take responsive action against the member
175 who perpetrated the crime.

176 (b) (i) An online dating service provider shall provide a clear and conspicuous method
177 for a Utah member to contact the online dating service provider to report a member who
178 engages in an act of sexual or intimate partner violence, a financial crime, or other misconduct.

179 (ii) An online dating service provider shall include the information described in
180 Subsection (2)(b)(i) in the safety awareness notification described in Subsection (1).

181 (3) An online dating service provider that provides the notification required under this
182 section shall give the notification at the time a Utah member registers with the online dating
183 service provider and by way of a link on the online dating service provider's main website or
184 mobile application.

185 Section 6. Section **13-63-105** is enacted to read:

186 **13-63-105. Fraud ban notification.**

187 (1) An online dating service provider shall provide to a Utah member a fraud ban
188 notification if the Utah member has received and responded to a message from a banned
189 member.

190 (2) A fraud ban notification under Subsection (1) shall include:

191 (a) to the extent permitted by law, the banned member's username, identification
192 number, or other profile identifier;

193 (b) a statement that the banned member may have been using a false identity or
194 attempting to defraud members;

195 (c) a statement that a member should not send money or personal financial information
196 to another member; and

197 (d) an online link to information regarding ways to avoid online fraud or being
198 defrauded by a member of an online dating service.

199 (3) A fraud ban notification under Subsection (1) shall be:

200 (a) clear and conspicuous;

201 (b) sent by email, text message, or other appropriate means of communication
202 consented to by the Utah member; and

203 (c) (i) except as provided in Subsection (3)(c)(ii), sent within 24 hours after a fraud ban
204 is initiated against a banned member; or

205 (ii) sent within three days after the day on which a fraud ban is initiated against a
206 banned member if, in the judgment of the online dating service provider, the circumstances
207 require the fraud ban notification be sent after the 24-hour period.

208 (4) Except as provided in Section [13-63-106](#), an online dating service provider or an
209 online dating service provider's employees and agents who are acting in good faith and in
210 compliance with this section are not liable to a person based on:

211 (a) the means of communication used to issue a fraud ban notification to a Utah

212 member under this section;

213 (b) the timing of a fraud ban notification sent to a Utah member under this section; or

214 (c) the disclosure of information in a fraud ban notification under this section,

215 including:

216 (i) information that a member is a banned member or the subject of a fraud ban;

217 (ii) the banned member's username, identification number, or other profile identifier; or

218 (iii) the reason that the online dating service provider initiated the fraud ban of the

219 banned member.

220 Section 7. Section **13-63-106** is enacted to read:

221 **13-63-106. Violation -- Enforcement -- Limitations.**

222 (1) (a) The division may enforce the provisions of this chapter in accordance with

223 Chapter 2, Division of Consumer Protection.

224 (b) In addition to the division's enforcement powers under Subsection (1)(a), a

225 municipal, county, or state prosecuting authority may enforce this chapter through a civil action

226 if the prosecuting authority is screening or prosecuting a criminal matter based on sexual or

227 intimate partner violence or a financial crime perpetrated against a Utah member by an

228 individual the Utah member met on an online dating service.

229 (2) (a) An online dating service provider that violates this chapter is, in addition to any

230 other penalties established by law, liable for:

231 (i) a civil penalty not to exceed \$250 for each Utah member at the time of the violation;

232 and

233 (ii) filing fees and reasonable attorney fees.

234 (b) A court shall enjoin an online dating service provider who violates this chapter

235 from an additional violation of this chapter.

236 (3) This chapter does not:

237 (a) provide a basis for or create a private right of action; or

238 (b) diminish or adversely affect protections for an online dating service provider under

239 47 U.S.C. Sec. 230.

240 Section 8. **Effective date.**

241 This bill takes effect on January 1, 2024 with the exception of [13-2-1](#) which takes

242 effect on 12/31/2023.