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Utah Court Denies Tiktok's Motion to Dismiss in Landmark Children's Protection Lawsuit

SALT LAKE CITY – In a significant legal victory for the state of Utah, Third District Court Judge Richard Daynes has denied TikTok's motion to dismiss Utah's October 2023 lawsuit aimed at addressing the harmful impact of the platform on children. The lawsuit, brought by the Utah Department of Commerce's Division of Consumer Protection and is represented by the Utah Attorney General's Office (AGO), accuses TikTok of luring young users into addictive behaviors and misleading them about the app's safety features.

Attorney General Sean Reyes expressed his determination to protect Utah's youth, stating, "We are thrilled with the court's ruling. Today's decision is a crucial step forward in our battle against the harmful practices of TikTok. We refuse to let a social media giant evade responsibility for its role in fostering addiction and exposing our children to multifarious threats. This case is all about safeguarding our kids and holding TikTok accountable for its actions."

The lawsuit comes after an extensive investigation by the Division of Consumer Protection (Division), which revealed concerns that TikTok's practices could be likened to "digital nicotine," promoting unhealthy engagement among young Utahans. The Division has been proactive in pursuing accountability, with this case being among the first of its kind in the nation amid rising scrutiny of TikTok by various state and federal enforcers.

Margaret Busse, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce, emphasized the state's commitment to ensuring online safety for its residents. "We are steadfast in our mission to protect our children from predatory and exploitative behavior. TikTok's deceptive practices must be addressed, and we will continue our fight to ensure the welfare of Utah's children is prioritized."

The court ruling allows Utah's complaint and trial to proceed, reinforcing the state's position against TikTok's alleged misconduct. In addition, the state plans to advance a separate complaint filed in 2024 targeting TikTok's LIVE platform, which has been linked to the exploitation of minors and potential money laundering.

As the case moves forward, the Division and AGO remain vigilant in their efforts to safeguard the welfare of Utah's children and to halt TikTok's predatory conduct.

A copy of the Judge Daynes ruling is attached.

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