California SB 243: Companion Chatbots

CA-SB-243 · US · binding regulation

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Summary

SB 243 ('Companion chatbots'), Chapter 677, Statutes of 2025, approved by the Governor and filed with the Secretary of State on October 13, 2025, adds Chapter 22.6 (§§ 22601–22606) to Division 8 of the California Business and Professions Code — the first US state statute to specifically regulate 'companion chatbots' (AI systems with a natural-language interface that provide adaptive, human-like responses meeting a user's social needs). Operators must give a clear, conspicuous notification that the chatbot is AI and not human where a reasonable person would be misled (§ 22602(a)), maintain a published self-harm/crisis-referral protocol (§ 22602(b)), and protect known minors (§ 22602(c): a default every-three-hours AI/break reminder and measures against sexually explicit content). Enforcement is a private right of action (§ 22605: injunctive relief, the greater of actual damages or $1,000 per violation, and attorney's fees) — a deployment/consumer-protection design distinct from the frontier-developer transparency statute SB 53 (TFAIA, ch. 138). Operator duties are operative Jan. 1, 2026; § 22603 annual reporting to the Office of Suicide Prevention begins July 1, 2027.

At a glance

Adopted

2025-10-13

Effective

2026-01-01

Status

in force

Primary source

Cal. Stats. 2025, ch. 677 (SB 243); Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code, Div. 8, ch. 22.6, §§ 22601–22606 (added by SB 243, approved by Governor Oct. 13, 2025)

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CHICAGO

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HARVARD

Policy Window (2025) 'California SB 243: Companion Chatbots', Wiki article — Instrument, available at: https://policywindow.org/wiki/ca-sb-243.

OSCOLA

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