

New York's AI companion safeguards take effect, enforced by the Attorney General

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Governor Kathy Hochul today announced nation-leading safeguards for AI companions operating in New York are now in effect. The law, championed as part of the Governor's Executive Budget earlier this year, requires AI Companion operators to implement safety features and provide notifications to interrupt users who are engaging for sustained periods with these systems. AI Companions are now required to detect and implement a safety protocol if a user expresses suicidal ideation or self harm, including referring them to a crisis center. The law also requires Companion operators to notify and remind users that they are not interacting with a human every three hours of continued use. The AI companion law builds on the Governor's commitment to protecting New Yorkers from digital harm and expanding AI for public good. See the open letter that was sent to companies here.

"It is the responsibility of leaders to make sure that the innovative technologies shaping our world also protect those that use them, especially our young ones across the state," **Governor Hochul said.** "I look forward to working with companies and my partners in state government to continue to ensure that New York State remains a global leader in carving the path towards the future of responsible AI."

Attorney General Letitia James said, "The stories of people who have been encouraged by AI bots to hurt themselves or take their own lives are heartbreaking. AI companies have a responsibility to protect their users and ensure their products do not manipulate or harm people who use these AI companions. No company should be able to profit off an AI companion that puts its users at risk. I thank Governor Hochul for taking decisive action to ensure New York continues to lead the way in AI safety, and I will not hesitate to hold companies accountable for harming New Yorkers with unsafe AI products."

"AI companions" are designed to simulate human relationships with users — like posing as an AI friend or romantic partner. These systems may remember personal details, adapt their personality to user preferences, and are designed to keep users engaged. Recent reports point to increasing use of AI companions, and some experts warn that these systems are not safe for minors or vulnerable populations. To protect New Yorkers from digital harm, as a part of the FY26 Enacted Budget, Governor Hochul established these new safeguards as General Business Law Article 47, requiring companies to implement safety measures for users and providing users with resources to seek assistance.

****Responsibilities Under the New Law****

Effective November 5, 2025, AI Companion operators must:

* Implement safety protocols for crisis intervention: AI Companions must detect signs of suicidal ideation or self-harm and promptly direct users to crisis service providers. * Interrupt extended use: Clearly and regularly notify users that they are interacting with artificial intelligence, not a human, including conspicuous notifications at session start and periodic intervals of every three hours of continued companion use.

Non-compliance will result in penalties, enforced by the New York Attorney General, and any fines collected will help fund suicide prevention programs in New York State.

State Senator Kristen Gonzalez said, "I'm really proud to have worked with the State legislature and the Governor to champion AI legislation like this companion law. As AI tools like chatbots are adopted, we're seeing the impact of responsive regulation in real time. Companies are already changing their policies to protect children and monitor certain types of content like medical, legal, or financial advice. Thank you to Governor Hochul for her focus on making New York a responsible AI leader, and I look forward to working together to continue passing laws that place public good at the forefront of AI."

****Assemblymember Steve Otis said,**** “The 2025-26 state budget includes significant protections and notifications to users of AI companion tools. Of special importance is the responsibility to take ‘reasonable efforts for detecting and addressing suicidal ideation or expressions of self-harm expressed by a user’ and the repeated notification that the user is communicating with an AI tool, not a human. These protections are another example of the leadership of Governor Hochul and both houses of the Legislature in keeping pace with fast-growing technologies such as artificial intelligence.”