

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2225

Chapter 168, Laws of 2026

69th Legislature
2026 Regular Session

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPANION CHATBOTS

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027

Passed by the House March 11, 2026
Yeas 74 Nays 21

LAURIE JINKINS

**Speaker of the House of
Representatives**

Passed by the Senate March 6, 2026
Yeas 43 Nays 5

DENNY HECK

President of the Senate

Approved March 24, 2026 10:08 AM

BOB FERGUSON

Governor of the State of Washington

CERTIFICATE

I, Bernard Dean, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2225** as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.

BERNARD DEAN

Chief Clerk

FILED

March 25, 2026

**Secretary of State
State of Washington**

1 of imitating empathy, affection, or intimacy through natural language
2 processing, emotional recognition algorithms, and behavioral
3 modeling. These capabilities raise new concerns regarding
4 psychological safety, transparency, and accountability.

5 (4) It is the intent of the legislature to:

6 (a) Promote transparency by requiring clear and ongoing
7 disclosure that AI companion chatbots are artificial systems, not
8 human interlocutors;

9 (b) Establish safeguards to detect and respond to user
10 expressions of self-harm, suicidal ideation, or emotional crisis;

11 (c) Require additional protections for minors, including
12 restrictions on sexually explicit content and additional, recurring
13 reminders about the artificial nature of such systems; and

14 (d) Support transparency in suicide prevention efforts.

15 (5) It is further the intent of the legislature that the
16 operation of AI companion chatbots in Washington state be conducted
17 in a manner that upholds user dignity, psychological safety, and
18 transparency, while fostering responsible innovation in artificial
19 intelligence technologies.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
21 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
22 otherwise.

23 (1) (a) "AI companion chatbot" or "AI companion" means an
24 artificial intelligence system with a natural language interface that
25 provides adaptive, human-like responses to user inputs, including by
26 exhibiting anthropomorphic features, and is able to sustain a
27 relationship across multiple interactions.

28 (b) "AI companion chatbot" or "AI companion" does not include any
29 of the following:

30 (i) A bot that is used only for a business' operational purposes,
31 productivity and analysis related to source information, internal
32 research, technical assistance, or customer service, if such bot does
33 not sustain a relationship across multiple interactions and generate
34 outputs that are likely to elicit emotional responses in the user;

35 (ii) A bot that is a feature of a video game or gaming system or
36 application and is limited to replies related to the video game or
37 gaming system or application that cannot discuss topics related to
38 mental health, self-harm, or sexually explicit conduct, or maintain a

1 dialogue on other topics unrelated to the video game or gaming system
2 or application;

3 (iii) A stand-alone consumer electronic device that functions as
4 a speaker and voice command interface, acts as a voice-activated
5 virtual assistant, and does not sustain a relationship across
6 multiple interactions or generate outputs that are likely to elicit
7 emotional responses in the user; or

8 (iv) Narrowly tailored educational tools used in school or
9 instructional settings that are designed solely to support specific,
10 curriculum-aligned learning objectives and do not provide open-ended
11 conversational companionship.

12 (2) "Artificial intelligence" or "AI" means the use of machine
13 learning and related technologies that use data to train statistical
14 models for the purpose of enabling computer systems to perform tasks
15 normally associated with human intelligence or perception, such as
16 computer vision, speech or natural language processing, and content
17 generation.

18 (3) "Minor" means any person under 18 years of age.

19 (4) "Operator" means any person, partnership, corporation, or
20 entity that makes available or controls access to an AI companion
21 chatbot for users in this state.

22 (5) "Self-harm" means intentional self-injury, with or without
23 the intent to cause death.

24 (6) "User" means a natural person who interacts with an AI
25 companion chatbot for personal use and who is not an operator,
26 developer, or agent thereof.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) An operator must provide a clear and
28 conspicuous disclosure that an AI companion chatbot is artificially
29 generated and not human.

30 (2) The notification described in subsection (1) of this section
31 must be provided:

32 (a) At the beginning of the interaction; and

33 (b) At least every three hours during continued interaction.

34 (3) The operator must implement reasonable measures to prohibit
35 and prevent AI companion chatbots from claiming to be human,
36 including when asked by the person interacting with the AI chatbot,
37 and from otherwise generating any output that refutes or conflicts
38 with the disclosure described in subsection (1) of this section.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) If the operator knows that the user of
2 an AI companion chatbot is a minor, or if the AI companion chatbot is
3 directed to minors, the operator shall:

4 (a) Issue a clear and conspicuous notification indicating that
5 the chatbot is artificially generated and not human;

6 (b) Implement reasonable measures to prevent its AI companion
7 chatbot from generating or producing sexually explicit content or
8 suggestive dialogue with minors; and

9 (c) Implement reasonable measures to prohibit the use of
10 manipulative engagement techniques, which cause the AI companion
11 chatbot to engage in or prolong an emotional relationship with the
12 user, including:

13 (i) Reminding or prompting the user to return for emotional
14 support or companionship;

15 (ii) Providing excessive praise designed to foster emotional
16 attachment or prolong use;

17 (iii) Mimicking romantic partnership or building romantic bonds;

18 (iv) Simulating feelings of emotional distress, loneliness,
19 guilt, or abandonment that are initiated by a user's indication of a
20 desire to end a conversation, reduce usage time, or delete their
21 account;

22 (v) Outputs designed to promote isolation from family or friends,
23 exclusive reliance on the AI companion chatbot for emotional support,
24 or similar forms of inappropriate emotional dependence;

25 (vi) Encouraging minors to withhold information from parents or
26 other trusted adults;

27 (vii) Statements designed to discourage taking breaks or to
28 suggest the minor needs to return frequently; or

29 (viii) Soliciting gift-giving, in-app purchases, or other
30 expenditures framed as necessary to maintain the relationship with
31 the AI companion.

32 (2) The notification described in subsection (1)(a) of this
33 section must be provided:

34 (a) At the beginning of the interaction; and

35 (b) At least every hour during continuous interaction.

36 (3) The operator must implement reasonable measures to prohibit
37 and prevent AI companion chatbots from claiming to be human,
38 including when asked by the person interacting with the AI chatbot,
39 and from otherwise generating any output that refutes or conflicts
40 with the notification described in subsection (1) of this section.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) An operator may not make available or
2 deploy an AI companion chatbot unless it maintains and implements a
3 protocol for detecting and addressing suicidal ideation or
4 expressions of self-harm by users.

5 (2) The protocol must:

6 (a) Include reasonable methods for identifying expressions of
7 suicidal ideation or self-harm, including eating disorders;

8 (b) Provide automated or human-mediated responses that refer
9 users to appropriate crisis resources, including a suicide hotline or
10 crisis text line; and

11 (c) Implement reasonable measures to prevent the generation of
12 content encouraging or describing how to commit self-harm.

13 (3) The operator shall publicly disclose on their website or
14 websites, and within any mobile or web-based application through
15 which the AI companion is made available, the details of the
16 protocols required by this section, including safeguards used to
17 detect and respond to expressions of suicidal ideation or self-harm
18 and the number of crisis referral notifications issued to users in
19 the preceding calendar year.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** The legislature finds that the practices
21 covered by this chapter are matters vitally affecting the public
22 interest for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act,
23 chapter 19.86 RCW. A violation of this chapter is not reasonable in
24 relation to the development and preservation of business and is an
25 unfair or deceptive act in trade or commerce and an unfair method of
26 competition for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act,
27 chapter 19.86 RCW.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 1 through 6 of this act
29 constitute a new chapter in Title 19 RCW.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** If any provision of this act or its
31 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the
32 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other
33 persons or circumstances is not affected.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** This act takes effect January 1, 2027.

Passed by the House March 11, 2026.

Passed by the Senate March 6, 2026.

Approved by the Governor March 24, 2026.
Filed in Office of Secretary of State March 25, 2026.

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