



Frantz Law Group, APLC

Social Media Litigation

Social Media Litigation: Everything You Need to Know

Over the past three years, Frantz Law Group attorneys and staff have been working tirelessly representing nearly 1,000 school districts across the country against JUUL Labs, Altria and other named defendants to hold them accountable for the youth vaping epidemic that is impacting our nation. As a result of our efforts, along with other law firms, a proposed settlement was reached with JUUL Labs and its Founders, Directors and Board Members in December 2022. You can read further about this proposed settlement:

[JUUL agrees to pay \\$1.2 billion in youth-vaping settlement - Bloomberg News | Reuters](#)

Despite the proposed settlement with JUUL Labs, Inc. et al., we continue our litigation against Altria and other defendants for the vaping epidemic. There is another challenge being faced by school districts that needs to be addressed now: the mental health crisis of students that has been caused by social media companies. We see children constantly using these platforms, at home and at school, often to the point of developing a severe addiction. Inadequate age verification measures, insufficient parental controls, targeted algorithms, constant notifications and endless scrolling have been designed to addict students.

The United States Surgeon General has declared a national advisory on the youth mental health crisis, blaming social media, in part, for the growing number of youths experiencing depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges. You can read the full report [HERE](#). The CDC National Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that the rate of teen depression rose by more than 60% between 2011 and 2018.

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Frantz Law Group has commenced litigation on behalf of public entities, such as school districts, against Meta, TikTok, Snap, and YouTube as well as other social media companies. This lawsuit alleges that these companies have caused a mental health crisis among children and teenagers that is marked by higher proportions of anxiety, depression and thoughts of self-harm, all of which severely affect their ability to succeed in school.

Many children and teenagers spend an inordinate amount of time scrolling through Meta, Instagram, TikTok and other social media platforms, where they are subjected to often harmful and exploitative content that encourages disordered eating, unhealthy social comparison and cyberbullying.

As a result of this harmful content, students are experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. Students performing worse in school, are less likely to attend school, are more likely to engage in substance use and to act out somewhat violently, all of which affects a public entity's ability to fulfill its educational mission.

How will filing a lawsuit against social media companies benefit your public entity?

Suing social media companies provides public entities the opportunity to recover financial reimbursement for the expenses the public entities have incurred because of the youth mental health crisis. Some entities have spent thousands of dollars, countless hours, and other important resources to implement or adjust their methods of supervising students, disciplining student behavior, and assisting addicted students who are constantly accessing social media platforms on school property. Even if your public entity has not yet expended substantial resources to deal with this problem, investigating claims and potentially filing a lawsuit can assist to obtain the “future damages” to mitigate the social media-caused mental health crisis present in your public entity.

Beyond the opportunity for financial recovery, public entity participation in this litigation is critical. Social media companies have targeted children with addictive and harmful products that feature no warnings or instructions for safe usage. Public entities have been especially impacted and are in a unique position to take a stand against this misconduct. Public entities joining together in this litigation will play a pivotal role in holding social media companies accountable and sending the message to these companies that profits should not be prioritized at the expense of children’s health and safety. Social media companies need to be held accountable for the harm they are causing and should provide schools with financial resources to mitigate this mental health crisis on the front lines.



Frantz Law Group has trial-tested their extensive experience securing landmark verdicts and settlements*

- **\$13.5 billion** -against Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) in 2020 on behalf of thousands of victims harmed in the 2017 and 2018 Northern California wildfires (Frantz Law Group represents 4,500 clients of approximately 40,000 victims). Mr. Frantz played an integral role in obtaining this landmark settlement.**
- **\$1.8 billion**-against Southern California Gas Company in 2021 (Frantz Law Group represents 8,202 clients of approximately 35,000 victims)**
- **\$1.2 billion**-pending settlement against JUUL Labs, Inc. in December 2022 (Frantz Law Group represents nearly 1,000 clients of 1,400 school districts)**
- **\$800 million**-against MGM Resorts International on behalf of victims of the 2017 Las Vegas Shooting at Mandalay Bay (Frantz Law Group represented 201 clients of approximately 586 victims). Mr. Frantz played a very important part in achieving this historic settlement.**
- **\$580 million**-catastrophic injury/wrongful death in various types of personal injury claims and tractor trailer crashes

**Results in other matters do not constitute a guarantee, warranty, or prediction of the outcome of your legal matter. Results are dependent on the facts of each case, and the results may vary based on different facts.*

***This is the amount recovered by all victims as part of a collective settlement. Under the settlement terms, each plaintiff's recovery is determined based on various factors. These amounts are not the totals recovered by Frantz Law Group clients.*

James P. Frantz, Esq. approves the content of this document.

Frantz Law Group Social Media Litigation Attorneys



James P. Frantz's 43 years of legal experience includes litigating catastrophic injury claims, tractor-trailer collisions, amusement park accidents, products liability, motorcycle, and automobile collisions, aviation accidents, fire and explosion related injuries and wrongful death claims, mass transit accidents, construction accidents, industrial accidents, complex business disputes, class actions, and mass torts. Mr. Frantz currently serves on the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee for the Porter Ranch Gas Leak litigation (one of the largest mass tort lawsuits in U.S. history), as well as the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee in the wildfire litigation against Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) and Southern California Edison (SCE).

The Daily Transcript honored Mr. Frantz as one of the Top 10 Attorneys. Mr. Frantz has been nominated for Top Attorneys in the insurance and personal injury category 2010 – 2023. Mr. Frantz has also been honored as a Super Lawyer and Tier One Best Lawyers of America for 15 consecutive years.

Mr. Frantz is a cum laude graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara and a graduate of Thomas Jefferson School of Law. He represented the San Diego County Bar Association as a Delegate to the State Bar of California and has served as a Special Master for the State Bar of California for the past 30 years. He has also been an Arbitrator for 30 years. He is a Master of the William B. Enright Chapter of the American Inns of Court. He is a Fellow and Associate of the prestigious American Board of Trial Advocates and is AV rated by Martindale-Hubbell.

- **\$55.4 million jury verdict***-awarded to the families of four Marines who were killed as a result of the negligence of San Diego Gas & Electric Utility (no pre-trial offer was made by defendants).
- **\$223 million jury verdict***-awarded in a professional negligence case (top pretrial offer was \$100,000).
- **\$18.5 million verdict***- Mr. Frantz's expertise was sought by Congress where he testified as a product liability expert with respect to the litigation he prosecuted against a drug manufacturer in which he won (with co-counsel) an \$18.5 million verdict. Within months of Mr. Frantz's congressional testimony, the product was banned by the federal government due to significant safety concerns.

**Reduced and appealed; resolved for a confidential amount*

Frantz Law Group Social Media Litigation Attorneys



William Shinoff is a trial lawyer at Frantz Law Group and specializes in litigating complex litigation and mass tort cases on behalf of public entities across the country. Mr. Shinoff attributes his love and passion for the courtroom to his family roots in the legal profession. Prior to joining Frantz Law Group, Mr. Shinoff represented School Districts and Public Entities throughout Southern California at one of the premier Public Entity law firms in Southern California. During his nine years representing public entities, Mr. Shinoff litigated matters in both state and federal court throughout California. Currently, Mr. Shinoff is the lead attorney for Frantz Law Group representing nearly 1000 public entities across the country against Juul Labs, Inc. and Altria in youth vaping litigation.

Mr. Shinoff's unique defense background enables him to deal with large corporate entities and big insurance companies and navigate through the smoke and mirrors of insurance company Bureaucracy. Mr. Shinoff strives to take a hands-on approach with his clients and makes sure they are completely satisfied and comforted throughout the litigation process.

Mr. Shinoff began his undergraduate studies at the University of Miami, Florida and completed his education at the University of Victoria, British Columbia where he obtained a bachelor's degree. Following university, he graduated cum laude from California Western School of Law where he was an associate editor on the Law Review Journal. He is admitted to practice law in California and Texas.

Social Media Litigation FAQ's



Frequently Asked Questions

- What legal claims do public entities have against social media companies?

Cases against social media companies involving public entities are based on a cause of action, this is, legal theory known as “public nuisance”. Public nuisance allows both government and private entities to hold companies liable for unique damages incurred as a result of the companies’ conduct. This cause of action has been successfully utilized by government and private entities to redress several similar public health epidemics, most notably the JUUL e-cigarette epidemic, current opioid crisis, and the original tobacco litigation in the 1990’s. Social media companies have caused a youth mental health crisis that has significantly impacted schools. Utilizing the public nuisance liability theory allows public entities to hold social media companies accountable for their conduct and the damage caused.

- How much of our staff’s time will this take up?

This is difficult to predict with certainty, but we anticipate minimal inconvenience and interruption. We understand that your school administrators are extremely busy, so we will do everything we can to make this process as efficient as possible. Because we anticipate your case may be consolidated in the Multidistrict Litigation (MDL) for pre-trial coordination, most of the litigation efforts will focus on issues common to all litigants. There will be some case-specific discovery in the MDL, but that would be mostly in the form of written discovery and document production. Given the expected large number of cases filed in MDL, the number of cases selected for more in-depth discovery and trials is usually relatively small. However, if your case is selected for trial, more in-depth discovery would occur in the form of depositions of key administrators.

- What are the costs/risks for public entities participating in this litigation?

Frantz Law Group will work on a contingency fee basis, meaning you are not required to pay any legal fees or expenses unless there is a financial compensation. All expenses associated with pursuing this claim will be advanced by the legal team. If there is a recovery Frantz Law Group will be reimbursed for expenses and fees out of the amount of recovery. If the case is not successful, the public entity will not owe Frantz Law Group for any legal fees or expenses whatsoever.

Additional Resources to Review

US Senators blast Big tech and called for the passage of federal legislation to regulate tech platforms in the midst of a mental health crisis among young Americans.

[Senators blast Big Tech companies over kids' safety amid renewed push for legislation - CNN](#)

Frantz Law Group contract was approved to provide services in connection to pursuing claims for damages associated with social media litigation.

[HPS to offer open campus with restrictions | News | tahlequahdailypress.com](#)

Former Meta product manager testifies before congress and reveals internal research by Meta that shows the company was aware of how harmful their programs are to the mental health of child users, teenage girls in particular.

[Frances Haugen Written Testimony.pdf \(mcusercontent.com\)](#)

Fourteen-year-old Adriana Kuch could not bear the humiliation after she was attacked inside her New Jersey high school and the clip of the assault was posted to TikTok.

[After Teen's Suicide, a New Jersey Community Grapples With Bullying \(yahoo.com\)](#)



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