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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF UTAH

HANNAH PAISLEY ZOULEK, a Utah resident; JESSICA CHRISTENSEN, a Utah resident; LU ANN COOPER, a Utah resident; M.C., a Utah resident, by and through her parent, LU ANN COOPER; VAL SNOW, a Utah resident; and UTAH YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS, a Utah association,

Plaintiffs,

v.

KATIE HASS, in her official capacity as Director of the Utah Dept of Commerce Division of Consumer Protection; SEAN REYES, in his official capacity as Utah Attorney General,

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF LU ANN COOPER IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

Case No. 2:24-cv-00031-DAK-DAO

Judge Dale A. Kimball

Magistrate Judge Daphne A. Oberg

I, Lu Ann Cooper, declare as follows:

1. I live in Roy, Utah with my husband and eight children.
2. I was raised in a polygamous family and forced to marry my first cousin at the age of 15, as his fourth wife. At age 20, I fled the community with my two daughters and a few belongings. At the time, I had no credit, no high school diploma, and no referrals that I could use to help start my new life outside of the community. Eventually, I graduated high school and enrolled in community college. These experiences gave me a passion for helping others who choose to leave abusive homes.
3. In 2017, I founded an organization called Hope After Polygamy with four other women who also left polygamy, including Plaintiff Jessica Christensen. The organization connects individuals who have left polygamy to resources in their communities and provides help for their journeys to the outside world. We award scholarships for education—toward a GED, college up to a bachelor-level degree, and trade-skill certificates.
4. I work full-time in my role as President of the organization—raising funds, researching and writing grants, and supporting many other aspects of the organization.
5. Hope After Polygamy maintains social network accounts on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X. We publish content through those accounts to efficiently spread awareness to a large group of teens and adults leaving polygamy about various resources, such as information on free health screenings and financial literacy classes. Specifically on Instagram, we publish posts, “reels” (edited video clips), and “stories” (photos or videos that auto-play in a slideshow format for 24-hour periods), advertising our resources and other positive messages.
6. Sometimes, individuals reach out to me personally—or others at Hope After Polygamy—either through social networks, or by email after finding our email addresses on social networks. These individuals (including minors) sometimes request assistance, resources, or

information regarding leaving abusive homes or escaping forced marriages. We either provide them with information or refer them to other organizations if they are seeking services that we don't provide.

7. I have also seen positive effects of social networks on my and my children's lives. I have eight children, ranging in age from 11 to 26—including Allison Eames, whom I adopted out of an abusive polygamous home after she ran away in 2015 at age 16. Allison was able to run away after reaching out to Plaintiff Jessica Christensen over Facebook. Jessica helped her escape, and I adopted her after the court placed her in my and my husband's care.

8. I also personally enjoy using social networks for a variety of purposes. For example, I follow news on X (formerly Twitter), and use Facebook and Instagram to explore my interests in gardening, house plants, and raising chickens.

9. Additionally, a few years ago, my son was in a terrible hiking accident at age 15 and had to be hospitalized. During this trying time, I created a Facebook page for him where I could update family and my son's friends on his recovery process. This outlet both gave me and my son a sense of community and support, and provided an easy way for my son to remain connected to his family and friends at a difficult and isolating time.

10. I allow my children to use social networks under my guidance. I am aware of and use voluntary tools provided by social network companies to manage online activity in our household. My 11- and 13-year-old children use "Messenger Kids" accounts, which are specifically designed for kids to connect with family and friends under customizable parental supervision settings that I can calibrate and control. My 17-year-old daughter, M.C., also uses Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, Lemon8, and BeReal. I can control my daughter's access to social networks through in-app parental settings that let me set daily time limits or scheduled breaks, and

let me monitor the accounts my daughter is following or followed by if I choose to do so. These are choices my husband and I can make case-by-case over time, as we see fit. For example, when M.C. first got an Instagram account, I imposed certain restrictions, but eventually lifted them when I saw that she was able to use the platform responsibly and safely on her own.

11. I feel comfortable with my children's social network usage, and I think it is important for them to have a sense of autonomy for their self-development. This requires trust. My husband and I educate our kids on how to be safe online and trust them to make some decisions on their own, knowing they can—and trusting they will—come to us with any questions or concerns. Each family and each child is different, and in typical non-abusive households, I believe decisions about parental supervision and control of their kids' use of social networks are best left to parents to make individually for each of their children. Under the approach we have taken in our family, I believe social networks are no riskier to my children's safety than access to email and text messaging, and it is not realistic to shield them from this technology.

12. The Utah Minor Protection in Social Media Act (the "Act") will impede my ability to make decisions about how I want to raise each of my children and how I choose to expose them to technology. The Act makes several decisions about my children's access to technology that I do not have the ability to override. For example, the Act prohibits, regardless of parental consent, social network companies from allowing minors to use features such as auto-play, continuous scrolling, or pagination—which essentially means that my children cannot use (at least in their current form) some of the most popular apps like Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok, even if I allowed them to.

13. The Act also inexplicably prohibits minor accounts from receiving push notifications, which can be used to alert children about time-sensitive safety concerns. This

provision could actively endanger my children's lives, but I have no ability to override it under the Act. In fact, my children and I have used social networks to receive timely updates on public safety events. For example, there were recently several gun-related incidents at M.C.'s high school; and she turned to Instagram to receive timely information on what had transpired. The fact that M.C. and my other minor children would not be able to receive relevant push notifications if such an event occurred in the future is very troubling.

14. Additionally, the Act would force my children to seek my permission in order to override other significant restrictions—such as the ability to share content with anyone beyond their current connections. While I would grant such permission to my children if I deemed it appropriate under the circumstances, the government should not be deciding which portions of social networks my children can access with or without my permission. This undermines the trust that my husband and I have built with our children and our desire for them to learn to make independent decisions responsibly.

15. The law would also undermine my work at Hope After Polygamy to reach and support at-risk youth in unsafe homes and communities. Any minor using a social network account to access our content or communicate with our staff is looking for a connection to the outside world. It is very unlikely that these minors would publicly follow us on Instagram because doing so would indicate to their families and communities that they were considering escaping. It is also extremely unlikely that the parents of these children would allow them to override the provision of the Act that prohibits direct-messaging non-connected accounts.

16. Additionally, this restriction may not only affect minors, but also adults in these communities who do not have access to a government ID and thus could not comply with the age-verification requirement. It is not uncommon, especially for women in the polygamous

community, to be denied access to a government ID as a form of control. For example, when I was preparing to leave the community, one of my family members broke into my apartment and stole all of my forms of government identification, in an effort to obstruct me from leaving. Individuals in such a situation would not be able to direct-message Hope After Polygamy on social networks. By obstructing such connections, and blocking our targeted outreach, the Act would effectively assist certain polygamous groups in keeping children and even some adults confined.

17. Because the Act also prohibits Utah minors and non-age-verified accounts from viewing autoplay, continuous scrolling, or pagination features, it could also prevent these individuals from using Instagram, where Hope After Polygamy publishes much of its content via posts, stories, and reels, advertising its scholarship program and other resources and sharing positive encouragement.

18. Additionally, I find it very troubling that the law would require both my children and me to submit personal identification data to technology companies simply to create or maintain full access to our social network accounts. I take privacy very seriously for myself and my family members. If the law takes effect in October, I will either stop using social networks entirely or resort to the highly restricted form of social networks mandated for minors, rather than submit identifying information that could be hacked, mishandled, or misused. It would be very upsetting to lose such a powerful tool for connecting with others, but it is a sacrifice I would make to keep my and my children's data and identities safe.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed in Roy, Utah this 30th day of May, 2024.



Lu Ann Cooper