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1. [\*In re Soc. Media Adolescent Addiction/Personal Inj. Prods. Liab. Litig., 2025 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 105576\*](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** (("Protecting Our Kids" w/10 "social media" w/5 addiction) OR ("Social Media" w/5 minors) OR ("Child Data Privacy" OR "SB 976" OR "§ 27002" OR 27002)) AND (platform! OR recommender! OR algorithm!)

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

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US Cases

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## ***In re Soc. Media Adolescent Addiction/Personal Inj. Prods. Liab. Litig.***

Judicial Panel On Multidistrict Litigation

June 2, 2025, Filed

MDL No. 3047

### Reporter

2025 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 105576 \*; 2025 LX 127048

IN RE: SOCIAL MEDIA ADOLESCENT  
ADDICTION/PERSONAL INJURY PRODUCTS  
LIABILITY LITIGATION

**Prior History:** [\*In re Soc. Media Adolescent  
Addiction/Personal Injury Prods. Liab. Litig.\*, 637 F.  
Supp. 3d 1377, 2022 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 183703, 2022  
WL 5409144 \(Oct. 6, 2022\)](#)

### Core Terms

media, addictive, **platform**, user, decedent, vacate

### Case Summary

#### Overview

#### Key Legal Holdings

- The action listed on Schedule A involves common questions of fact with the actions comprising MDL No. 3047, and transfer under [28 U.S.C.S. § 1407](#) will serve the convenience of the parties and witnesses and promote the just and efficient conduct of the litigation.
- The pendency of a remand motion is insufficient to warrant vacating a conditional transfer order.

#### Material Facts

- The plaintiff's son was hit by a train and died after being the victim of a sexual extortion scheme on the Instagram and Snap social media **platforms**.
- The plaintiff alleges that the social media defendants (Meta and Snap, Inc.) knew about the prevalence of "sextortion" on their **platforms** but failed to implement sufficient

safety features or warnings.

- The plaintiff also asserts claims against in-state defendants related to the operation of the train and maintenance of the grounds surrounding the train track.

#### Controlling Law

- [28 U.S.C.S. § 1407](#) governs the transfer of civil actions involving common questions of fact to a single district for coordinated or consolidated pretrial proceedings.

#### Court Rationale

The court found that the plaintiff's action contains allegations that the social media **platforms** were designed to be addictive to minors and that the plaintiff alleges harm stemming from the addictive design and defendants' intent, which are similar to the issues in the MDL. The court held that the pendency of a remand motion does not limit the pretrial jurisdiction of the court where the action is pending, and the transferee judge can rule on the remand motion if necessary.


#### Outcome

#### Procedural Outcome


The Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation ordered the transfer of the action listed on Schedule A (Sullivan v. Meta **Platforms**, Inc., et al.) to the Northern District of California for inclusion in the coordinated or consolidated pretrial proceedings of MDL No. 3047.

### LexisNexis® Headnotes

Civil Procedure > Preliminary  
 Considerations > Venue > Multidistrict Litigation

**HN1** The Panel on Multidistrict Litigation holds that transfer of a particular action is often necessary to further the expeditious resolution of the litigation taken as a whole, even if it might inconvenience some parties to that action.

Civil Procedure > Preliminary  
 Considerations > Venue > Multidistrict Litigation

**HN2** The Panel on Multidistrict Litigation has consistently held that the pendency of a remand motion is insufficient to warrant vacating a conditional transfer order.

**Judges:** [\*1] Karen K. Caldwell, Chair, Nathaniel M. Gorton, Roger T. Benitez, Madeline Cox Arleo, Matthew F. Kennelly.

**Opinion by:** Karen K. Caldwell

## Opinion

### TRANSFER ORDER

**Before the Panel:**\* Plaintiff in the action listed on Schedule A (*Sullivan*) moves under Panel Rule 7.1 to vacate the Panel's order conditionally transferring the action to MDL No. 3047. Responding defendants Meta **Platforms**, Inc., Facebook Holdings, LLC, Facebook Operations, LLC, Facebook Payments, Inc., Facebook Technologies, LLC, and Instagram, LLC (together, Meta) oppose the motion to vacate.

After considering the arguments of counsel, we find that this action involves common questions of fact with the actions comprising MDL No. 3047, and that transfer under [28 U.S.C. § 1407](#) will serve the convenience of the parties and witnesses and promote the just and efficient conduct of the litigation. When we first centralized this litigation, we found that the actions involved factual questions arising from "allegations that defendants' social media **platforms** are defective because they are designed to maximize user screen time, which can encourage addictive behavior in

adolescents. Plaintiffs allege defendants were aware, but failed to warn the public, that their **platforms** were harmful to **minors**." See [\*2] [In re Social Media Adolescent Addiction/Personal Injury Prods. Liab. Litig.](#), 637 F. Supp. 3d 1377, 1378 (J.P.M.L. 2022). The MDL actions share questions of fact concerning whether social media **platforms** encourage addictive behavior, fail to verify users' ages, encourage adolescents to bypass parental controls, and inadequately safeguard against harmful content and/or intentionally amplify harmful and exploitive content. See *id.*

Plaintiff alleges his son was hit by a train and died after he was the victim of a sexual extortion scheme on the Instagram and Snap social media **platforms**. Plaintiff alleges the social media defendants<sup>1</sup> have known for years about the prevalence of "sextortion" on their **platforms**, but have taken insufficient steps to design their products with safety features or warnings to protect users, including the decedent. In addition to the social media defendants, plaintiff asserts claims against in-state defendants related to the operation of the train and the maintenance of the grounds surrounding the train track. In moving to vacate, plaintiff argues that (1) *Sullivan* involves unique factual questions because the decedent was an adult at the time of his death and the claims do not center on purposeful addiction of minors, age-verifications, parental controls, and the amplification of [\*3] harmful and exploitive content; (2) transfer would be unfair to plaintiff; and (3) *Sullivan* was improperly removed, and plaintiff's motion to remand to state court is pending.

Despite plaintiff's protestations to the contrary, *Sullivan* contains numerous allegations that the social media **platforms** at issue were designed to be addictive to minors, and plaintiff alleges that his harm stems directly from the app's addictive design and defendants' intent. See *Sullivan* Compl. at ¶ 82 (alleging decedent's action in going to the train track "was the direct consequence of the horrible pressure, negative emotions, impulsive decision making, and the impact on the social development, emotions, mind and psyche of the Plaintiff's Decedent as a result of the design of the Social Media Defendants' **algorithms** and addictive intention and design"). See also *id.* at ¶ 108(b) (alleging defendants are negligent because they failed to warn that their products are addictive); ¶ 108(v)-(z) (alleging defendants are negligent because they failed to design **algorithms** to limit addictive engagement, and failed to implement other limits on frequent use, including opt-in

\* Judge David C. Norton and Judge Dale A. Kimball did not participate in the decision of this matter.

<sup>1</sup> Meta and Snap, Inc.

restrictions and session time notifications). Moreover, [\*4] the claims that plaintiff argues are at the center of his complaint—that defendants failed to implement safeguards and warnings that would have prevented extortionists from using their application to harm plaintiff—are similar to those involved in the MDL. See, e.g., Pl.'s Second Amended Master Comp. (Personal Injury), MDL No. 3047 ECF No. 494, at p. 7 ("Defendants' defective social media apps facilitate and contribute to the sexual exploitation and extortion of children, and the ongoing production and spread of child sex abuse material online."); see also Transfer Order (*Youngers*), MDL No. 3047, 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 18852 (J.P.M.L. Feb. 1, 2023), ECF No. 150 (transferring action in which plaintiffs alleged their child was a victim of sextortion). Finally, plaintiff's argument that the decedent was an adult at the time of his death is not a persuasive reason to exclude *Sullivan* from the MDL. Plaintiff alleges in his complaint that the decedent was "a social media user for many years since his early adolescent age" and "was deeply and negatively impacted by the design of these social media applications which were designed to maximize the amount of time a user is on the application in order to maximize their profits from each user." *Sullivan* Compl. at □ 83. As defendants argue, [\*5] the MDL includes many cases brought by once-adolescent users now bringing suit as adults.

Plaintiff's fairness arguments are similarly not well taken. [HN1](#)<sup>1</sup> The Panel repeatedly has held that transfer of a particular action often is necessary to further the expeditious resolution of the litigation taken as a whole, even if it might inconvenience some parties to that action. See, e.g., *In re Aqueous Film-Forming Foams Prods. Liab. Litig.*, 669 F. Supp. 3d 1375, 1380 (J.P.M.L. 2023) ("[W]e look to the overall convenience of the parties and witnesses, not just those of a single plaintiff or defendant in isolation."). Rather than arguing why transfer would not promote the just and efficient conduct of this litigation, plaintiff offers broad arguments that are directed to the MDL process itself. He provides no specific argument why transfer would prevent the just adjudication of his claims.

[HN2](#)<sup>2</sup> Finally, we consistently have held that the pendency of a remand motion is insufficient to warrant vacating a CTO.<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., *In re Ford PowerShift*

*Transmission Prods. Liab. Litig.*, 289 F. Supp. 3d 1350, 1352 (J.P.M.L. 2018) ("It is well-established that jurisdictional objections, including objections to removal, are not relevant to transfer. This is so even where, as here, plaintiffs assert that the removals were patently improper."). Plaintiff can present his motion to remand to the transferee judge. [\*6]

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the action listed on Schedule A is transferred to the Northern District of California and, with the consent of that court, assigned to the Honorable Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers for inclusion in the coordinated or consolidated pretrial proceedings.

#### PANEL ON MULTIDISTRICT LITIGATION

/s/ Karen K. Caldwell

Karen K. Caldwell

Chair

Nathaniel M. Gorton

Roger T. Benitez

Madeline Cox Arleo

Matthew F. Kennelly

#### SCHEDULE A

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

SULLIVAN v. META **PLATFORMS**, INC., ET AL., C.A. No. 2:25-00456

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<sup>2</sup> Panel Rule 2.1(d) expressly provides that the pendency of a conditional transfer order does not limit the pretrial jurisdiction of the court in which the subject action is pending. Between the date a remand motion is filed and the date that transfer of

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the action to the MDL is finalized, a court generally has adequate time to rule on a remand motion if it chooses to do so.