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### Optional

When it comes to finding a law relating to the use of the Internet, electronic devices, and/or information security, Section 230 is the perfect candidate for that matter since it provides immunity to online platforms from civil liability based on third-party content as well as immunity for removal of content in certain circumstances. In other words, Section 230 embodies the principle that we should all be responsible for our own actions and statements online, but generally not those of others. This correlates to the First Amendment, protection of freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

To give an in-depth analysis, Section 230 was created in the mid-1990s in order to protect internet platforms from liability for many of the things third parties say or do on them. In addition, Section 230 includes two main provisions: one that protects online services and users from liability when they do not remove third-party content, and one that protects them from liability when they do remove content. Without Section 230's legal protections, online services would face large legal expenses that would be detrimental to competition, innovation, and the U.S. economy.

Section 230 affects the use of a given material by creating three different 'carve-outs' for those who are using the internet for illegal means: Bad Samaritan Carve-Out, Carve-Outs for Child Abuse, Terrorism, and Cyber-Stalking, and Case-Specific Carve-outs for Actual Knowledge or Court Judgments. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the Attorney General believes "...Department proposes denying Section 230 immunity to truly bad actors. The title of Section 230's immunity provision—"Protection for 'Good Samaritan' Blocking and Screening of Offensive Material"—makes clear that Section 230 immunity is meant to incentivize and protect responsible online platforms. It, therefore, makes little sense to immunize from civil liability an online platform that purposefully facilitates or solicits third-party content or activity that would violate federal criminal law." What that means is if you

commit a crime or do something cruel to the government, Section 230 will not give you immunity in regard to your internet usage. Second, the Department proposes exempting from immunity specific categories of claims that address particularly egregious content, including child exploitation and sexual abuse, terrorism, and cyber-stalking. These targeted carve-outs would halt the over-expansion of Section 230 immunity and enable victims to seek civil redress in causes of action far afield from the original purpose of the statute. Which means that these actions are intolerant of Section 230. And lastly, the Department supports reforms to make clear that Section 230 immunity does not apply in a specific case where a platform had actual knowledge or notice that the third-party content at issue violated federal criminal law or where the platform was provided with a court judgment that content is unlawful in any respect. Meaning that Section 230 only applies to those who do not have an intention to commit any crime.

In a nutshell, Section 230 provides immunity to online platforms from civil liability based on third-party content as well as immunity for removal of content in certain circumstances. The good thing about Section 230 is it ensures that the Internet is not a playground for cybercriminals or black hat hackers. However, Section 230 can fall into the wrong hands if cybercriminals are strategic enough to commit any kind of cybercriminal operations. In addition, it can be beneficial to normal citizens who have a clean slate when it comes to criminal record(s). All in all, Section 230 is like VPN but for Good Samaritans.

#### Work Cited

- Department of Justice's review of Section 230 of the communications decency act of 1996. The United States Department of Justice. (2021, January 20). <https://www.justice.gov/archives/ag/departments-justice-s-review-section-230-communications-decency-act-1996>