

03.05.2026 Energy and Commerce Full Committee Markup - Documents for the Record

Minority

1. Letter from the National Association of Attorneys General (Feb. 10, 2026) submitted by Rep. Castor
2. New York Times article entitled, “Mark Zuckerberg Takes the Stand in Landmark Social Media Addiction Trial” (Feb. 18, 2026) submitted by Rep. Auchincloss
3. Washington Post article entitled, “Meta suppressed research on child safety, employees say” (Sept. 8, 2025) submitted by Rep. Auchincloss
4. Reuters article entitled, “Meta’s AI rules have let bots hold ‘sensual’ chats with kids, offer false medical info” (Aug. 14, 2025) submitted by Rep. Auchincloss
5. Time Magazine article entitled, “Court Filings Allege Meta Downplayed Risks to Children and Misled the Public” (Nov. 22, 2025) submitted by Rep. Auchincloss
6. The Hill article entitled, “Families deserve a fair shot at protecting children online” (Mar. 1, 2026) submitted by Rep. Auchincloss
7. Brookline News article entitled, “Town, school district join lawsuit against social media companies” (Sept. 5, 2025) submitted by Rep. Auchincloss
8. Letter from parent advocates to Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone (Mar. 4, 2026)

Majority

1. Letter from U.S. Chamber of Commerce in support of H.R. 6291 and KOSA. Submitted by the majority. (Mar. 5, 2026)
2. Letter from Grindr to support App Store Accountability Act. (Mar. 2, 2026)
3. Article from Woodhill Freedom Foundation by Allison Grossman to (Jun. 20, 2025)
4. Letter from ALLvanza in support of App Store Accountability Act. (Feb. 4, 2026)
5. Polls from ALLvanza in support for App Store Accountability Act. (Feb. 4, 2026)
6. Letter from American Principles Project SCREEN Act and App Store Accountability Act. (Dec. 10, 2025)
7. Letter from Pinterest in support of App Store Accountability. (Sep. 2, 2025)
8. Letter from Pinterest in support of App Store Accountability to Rep. John James (Sep. 2, 2025)
9. Letter from Concerned Women for America in support of App Store Accountability Act sponsored by Rep. John James. (Nov. 3, 2025)
10. Letter from American Public Power Association in support of all five Energy bills on 3.5.2026 E&C Markup. (Mar. 5, 2026)
11. Letter from Digital Childhood Alliance in support of App Store Accountability Act. (Mar. 5, 2026)
12. Letter from Michigan Anti-trafficking Project in support of App Store Accountability Act. (Feb. 25, 2026)

13. Letter from NRECA in support of H.R. 7266, H.R. 7258, H.R. 7305. (Feb. 4, 2026)
14. Letter from Woodhull Freedom Foundation in support of H.R. 7757. (Mar. 5, 2026)
15. Point of View from Peter Chandler, Executive Director of Internet Works.
16. Letter from NASEO in support of SECURE Act. (Jan. 12, 2026)
17. Briefing from Woodhull Freedom foundation on online Age Verification.
18. Letter from Michigan Anti-Trafficking Project from Leyna Lutrull on Preventing human trafficking. (Feb. 25, 2026)
19. Letter from Developers Alliance to support App Store Accountability Act. (Feb. 26, 2026)
20. Letter from Sheriff Bob Gualtieri, Trent Teyema, and Sheriff Chris West in support of H.R. 6292. (Mar. 4, 2026)
21. Letter from National Decency Coalition in support of H.R. 1623, SCREEN Act. (Mar. 3, 2026)
22. Article from Alliance for Consumers Trial Lawyer Pipeline Update.
23. Article from Law Crossing on Lawyer Campaign Contributions (Mar. 19, 2026)



March 5, 2026

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Energy & Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Energy & Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Guthrie and Ranking Member Pallone:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce (“Chamber”) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on legislation being considered by the House Energy & Commerce Committee (“Committee”) to protect children and teens online. Although we substantively support H.R. 6291, the “Children and Teens’ Online Privacy Protection Act” (“COPPA 2.0”), and the “Kids’ Online Safety Act” (“KOSA”), we believe it is critically important that Congress exercise its constitutional mandate to regulate interstate commerce by enacting a single national standard regarding children’s online privacy and protection.

I. Uniform National Standards as Proposed in KOSA and COPPA 2.0 Are Rooted in Constitutional Federalism

A single national standard is the appropriate mechanism to address children’s online privacy and other harms given that the internet is inherently interstate. The Founders enshrined in the United States Constitution the power of Congress to regulate commerce “among the several states”¹ and made federal legislation the supreme law of the land.²

The exclusive power of Congress to regulate interstate commerce is necessary to prevent regulatory confusion and conflicting regulations. James Madison noted in *The Federalist Papers*³ that the purpose of Congress’s authority to regulate interstate commerce was to facilitate economic harmony and prevent the economic defects that occurred when the United States operated under the Articles of Confederation. This same concept rings true today and has been acted upon by Congress numerous times to instill uniformity.

¹ U.S. Constitution Art. I § 8.

² U.S. Constitution Art. VI.

³ Federalist 42

The United States Supreme Court has upheld Congress' authority to regulate the channels and instrumentalities of interstate commerce as well as commercial activity that has a substantial impact on the national economy.⁴ The Supreme Court has also affirmed on numerous occasions the ability of Congress to preempt state regulatory action that encroaches on Congress' ability to foster a uniform national economy.⁵ In fact, Congress has successfully done so with enactment of national motor vehicle safety standards⁶; prohibitions on states regulating airline routes, service, and fares⁷; similar prohibitions on states regulating the scheduling or pricing of motor carriers⁸; and prohibitions on states imposing requirements that inhibit interstate communications.⁹

II. Uniform National Online Privacy and Protection Laws Are Necessary

A uniform national standard for children's online privacy and protection is necessary to eliminate confusion and potential conflicting state standards as well as foster certainty for parents and those providing online services. A single national approach to children and teen's *online* protections is legally appropriate, consistent with the Founders' approach to federalism, and is necessary to promote the modern economy. Online activity in today's connected digital world inherently relies on interstate commerce.¹⁰ Just as it would not make sense for airlines to have to navigate fifty different service, pricing, and safety rules, a patchwork of state privacy laws creates confusion and the potential for conflicting laws.

For example, in the broader privacy context, the State of Maryland recently enacted legislation that would prevent the collection of sensitive data¹¹. In June 2026, Colorado's SB-205 will go into effect, barring companies from developing or deploying AI that has a disparate discriminatory impact.¹² Because of Maryland's law, many companies may be left without the data necessary to determine compliance with Colorado's AI statute. In the context of children's privacy, state attempts to ensure the design of products and services are safe for children could impede another state's privacy protections.

⁴ *United States v. Lopez*, 514 U.S. 549, 558-59 (1995).

⁵ See Congressional Research Service, "Federal Preemption: A Legal Primer" (2023) available at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R45825#>.

⁶ 49 U.S.C. § 30103(a)(b).

⁷ 49 U.S.C. § 41713(b).

⁸ 49 U.S.C. § 14501(a).

⁹ 47 U.S.C. § 253(a).

¹⁰ See e.g. *United States v. Lewis*, 554 F.3d 208, 215 (1st Cir. 2009).

¹¹ Maryland HB 567 (2024)

¹² Colorado SB 205 (2024)

From an economic perspective, a patchwork of online privacy laws would harm the national economy. According to one report, fifty different state privacy laws could cost the American economy \$1 trillion over ten years, with small businesses incurring \$200 billion of that burden.¹³ The Chamber found that 65 percent of small business owners are concerned that out-of-state privacy laws will increase their litigation and compliance costs.¹⁴

It is imperative that Congress pass thoughtful, consistent, and seamless children’s protection and privacy legislation that works as opposed to an uncoordinated and unharmonized system of state regulation.

III. States Should Have a Role in Enforcement

While we believe that a uniform national approach to setting the rules for online protections is necessary, states should continue to have a role in pursuing enforcement against actors who violate the law. The Chamber fully supports the ability of state attorneys general to enforce comprehensive privacy legislation, as well as such legislation specifically protecting children and teens. As presented before the Committee, both COPPA 2.0 and KOSA would preserve the ability of state attorneys general to enforce violations against residents of their home states. State attorneys general and experts in consumer protection understand the impact of online harms on their respective constituencies.

IV. App Store Legislation

The Chamber believes that app store age-verification legislation should be preemptive, not require the sharing of excessive data, avoid imposing burdens on routine transactions for goods and services made in apps, and preserve longstanding knowledge standards in already existing children’s protection laws.

V. Conclusion

Children and teens deserve online protections, and their parents need the tools to prevent harms that can occur online. At the same time, the best approach to ensuring all American children are protected is a uniform national standard. We look forward to engaging with Congress on this important issue.

¹³ ITIF, “50-State Patchwork of Privacy Laws Could Cost \$1 Trillion More Than a Single Federal Law, New ITIF Report Finds” (January 2022) available at <https://itif.org/publications/2022/01/24/50-state-patchwork-privacy-laws-could-cost-1-trillion-more-single-federal/>.

¹⁴ U.S. Chamber of Commerce, *Empowering Small Business: The Impact of Technology on U.S. Small Business*, (August 2025) available at <https://www.uschamber.com/assets/documents/20251621-CTEC-Empowering-Small-Business-Report-2025-v1-r10-Digital-FINAL.pdf>.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact jcrenshaw@uschamber.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jordan Crenshaw". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jordan Crenshaw
Senior Vice President
Chamber Technology Engagement Center
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

CC: Members of the House Energy & Commerce Committee



2 March 2026

Brett Guthrie, Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee

Frank Pallone, Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee

Richard Hudson, Chairman
House Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Communications and
Technology

Doris Matsui, Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Communications and
Technology

Gus Bilirakis, Chairman
House Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Manufacturing, and Trade

Jan Schakowsky, Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Manufacturing, and Trade

Subject: Support the App Store Accountability Act – HR 3149

Dear Chairman Guthrie and Ranking Member Pallone,

Grindr is an 18+ app, and keeping minors off our platform is a top priority for our users, for our team, and for me as a dad and a CEO. We believe that protecting kids from age-inappropriate experiences online is one of the most urgent challenges we face as a society. At the same time, as the largest company in the world serving gay and bisexual men, we take our responsibility to champion our community's unique perspective and needs incredibly seriously.

Globally we see different approaches to the challenge of keeping kids safe online. Policymakers in several states are exploring legislation requiring app stores to do their part to prevent minors from accessing 18+ apps. Unfortunately, others, including the UK, are moving down a troubling path, requiring users to separately verify their age when using any app that may contain content inappropriate for minors, even if that means sharing highly sensitive personal information with dozens or hundreds of separate apps. This creates major privacy and safety risks and prevents many adult users, particularly those who have heightened privacy concerns, from participating and finding community online.

Rep. John James's App Store Accountability Act provides a better approach – an approach supported by nearly 90 percent of parents. Recognizing that keeping minors off of 18+ apps is a shared responsibility among parents, app stores, and app developers, the bill requires app stores to verify a user's age and share the information with app developers, which must authenticate the signal and share appropriate age ratings with app stores. The updated framework before the Committee prevents 18+ apps from being made available to minors in a manner privacy-preserving, practical, and effective. It's better for users, better for innovation, and safer for kids.

We commend the House Energy and Commerce Committee for its leadership on this issue and strongly urge the Committee to advance this critical legislation.

George Arison
CEO
Grindr



Age Verification Laws Limit Free Speech Online

October 29, 2024

By *Allison Grossman PhD*

Updated: June 20, 2025

The goal of age verification laws is to limit minors' access to online sexual content, in an effort to ensure children's safety.¹ However, age verification legislation is ineffective, insecure, or both. These laws require proof of age or parental consent² via disclosure of personal information, identification document uploads, or facial recognition software before accessing websites with sexual material. Courts and free speech advocates have challenged these laws on the grounds that they hinder First Amendment rights for both users and websites,^{3,4} and often fail to keep consumers' personal information safe.

Historically, courts have rejected age verification laws because they placed too many limits on adults' right to free speech.^{5,6} However, the Supreme Court has recently upheld Texas's new age verification laws, marking a shift from earlier rulings.

In June 2025, the Supreme Court reversed its previous decisions from lower courts and declared that age verification was a lawful way to protect kids from harmful online content, even if some adults lose access as a result.⁷ This decision creates tension between efforts to protect minors and long-standing First Amendment concerns about restricting lawful speech. The ruling also sets a precedent that could make it easier for lawmakers to pass similar censorship laws in the future. Supporters see this as a step toward stronger protections for minors, while critics warn it could open the door to broader restrictions on free speech online.

¹ Stardust, Zahra, Abdul Obeid, Alan McKee & Daniel Angus

² Athey, Philp

³ Free Speech Coalition

⁴ Free Speech Coalition.

⁵ Free Speech Coalition

⁶ Electronic Frontier Foundation

⁷ Free Speech Coalition.

Can you protect freedom of expression while requiring age verification online?

No, you cannot protect freedom of expression when you require age verification online. The Constitution protects freedom of expression, which gives people the right to seek, receive, and access legal content. Age verification makes it difficult for all consumers, regardless of age, to access sexual or erotic material. Material at risk from age verification restrictions includes anything the government deems harmful or obscene to minors. This could include pornography or erotic content, information about sex education and sexual health, and spaces where LGBTQ+ individuals, sex workers, and other sexuality-based communities connect or share information.

Age verification laws are framed as a way to protect minors, but inevitably affect all internet users and prohibit access to information for adults.⁸ While these policies will pose obstacles or deter some adults from accessing certain websites, age verification will also completely block adults who do not have the necessary identification to pass the requirements. Those least likely to have necessary identification include people without financial means to purchase replacements of lost IDs, those without citizenship, and adults with disabilities who do not have driver's licenses, causing unequal access to sexual content based on various privileges.^{9 10}

Another challenge is the use of facial recognition software instead of requiring ID uploads. This technology has been found to have biased accuracy depending on the users' gender, race, age,¹¹ and facial features.¹² As a result, it could incorrectly restrict adult users from accessing content.

Even adults who are able to provide accurate age verification have to give up their privacy to view legal content online. The right to remain nameless and anonymous is a firmly established First Amendment right,¹³ but age verification requires all users to forgo this right when accessing legal content online.

⁸Electronic Frontier Foundation

⁹ Blake

¹⁰Free Speech Coalition

¹¹Stardust et al

¹²Thomas, 2025

¹³Cyberspace Communication, Inc v Engler

Finally, permitting age verification laws for some sites risks setting a precedent to implement similar laws for social media platforms, as many states have already begun to propose and some have adopted.¹⁴ This effort runs the risk of blocking access to LGBTQ+ affirming spaces and reproductive and sexual health information,¹⁵ which have been shown to elevate safety for people without access to these communities or information offline.^{16 17}

Is age verification the most effective way to ensure online safety?

No, age verification is not the most effective way to ensure the safety of minors online. Age verification software often fails to keep minors away from explicit content, fails to keep minors' or adults' personal information safe, and overlooks alternative methods that are more effective.^{18 19} Content restrictions on individual devices or networks allow for tailored and effective parental control without exposing the general public to censorship and potential data breaches.

Age verification software often fails to effectively stop minors from accessing pornographic content online because age verification software is relatively easy to bypass. Firstly, age verification can be bypassed by utilizing an older friend's identification to obtain approval from a third-party verifier. Secondly, many consumers simply utilize a Virtual Private Network (VPN) and select a different state or country where age verification isn't required to view the material. In fact, searches for VPNs notably spiked in states after age verification or bans on pornographic websites were announced.²⁰ Most recently, VPN demand increased 334% in France after their age verification laws passed, with one company reporting a 1,000% increase in new sign-ins within the first 30 minutes following the ban.²¹ Similarly, a VPN company reported a 1800% spike in new users in the UK just days after their age verification ban was implemented. In fact, more than half of the top downloaded free Apple apps in the UK were also VPNs. This introduced an additional

¹⁴ Fire Free Speech Coalition

¹⁵ Bhatia

¹⁶ Berger

¹⁷ Craig et al

¹⁸ Weisman

¹⁹ Kapersky

²⁰ Cole

²¹ Dana

concern because not all VPNs offer the same degree of security, and the average user likely does not know how to vet different apps for safety.²²

AV also fails to keep all users' data secure. No age verification software in use in 2025 provides protection from data breaches and hackers, no matter how rigorously they implement security measures.^{23 24 25} Even if the AV provider is able to keep the information secure, it must pass through numerous online intermediaries before reaching the provider, with the threat of a data breach present at each point. Even companies that immediately delete data could be hacked in the time between a user's ID being uploaded and the vendor company removing the private information from their data.²⁶

Several courts have determined that age verification requirements for access to a website deter users because they do not trust that their information and identity will be safe.²⁷ Other countries have found similar safety concerns with age verification tools. Australia's eSafety Commissioner, for example, recommended increased media literacy and education instead of relying on age verification after finding that age verification poses risks to security and privacy.²⁸ The UK reports that age verification technologies are ineffective at guaranteeing citizens' privacy, given the inability to eliminate data breaches.²⁹ France stated that it was unable to identify a third-party service that accurately verifies age while respecting the privacy and security of users.³⁰

An alternative age verification method that utilizes filters or parental controls implemented at the user end would enable selective restrictions for minors without imposing a universal restriction that could prohibit adults from accessing content and speech protected by the First Amendment.

For example, Android and iPhones allow parents to implement controls on content, screen time, and privacy for their children's devices.³¹ Broadband companies also provide the option for parental controls to be used on any device connected to the home Wi-Fi

²²McMahon

²³ Weissman

²⁴ Lively

²⁵ Roth

²⁶ Athey

²⁷ American Civil Liberties Union v. Gonzales

²⁸ eSafety Commissioner

²⁹ Yar

³⁰ Weissman

³¹ Pinola

network, ensuring any computers or tablets being used at home are also secure for minors. ASACP.org allows the free use of its “RTA” (Restricted to Adults) tag to label adult sites that end-user filters can recognize, thereby preventing access by minors.

Interestingly, these alternatives to age verification software seem to be aligned with parents’ preferences. Globally, nearly 90% of parents believe it is primarily their responsibility to regulate their children’s digital behavior.³² More so, the vast majority of parents set limits on their children’s digital habits and discuss safe online behaviors with them.³³ However, only about half of American parents use parental control apps, while others utilize less automated oversight, such as checking their children’s digital history, providing digital education, and/or enforcing supervised screen time.³⁴ Most parents surveyed believe this approach is working, as only 1% of these surveyed report their child is not using their device as expected.

Overall, the research suggests that clear communication between parents and children about digital safety, combined with device- or network-side controls, would significantly increase the safety of minors online without affecting the individual First Amendment rights.

See Also:

- [How to Use the Parental Controls on a Smartphone](#)
- [How to keep your child safe on their smartphone – the definitive guide](#)

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³² Kaspersky

³³ IBID

³⁴ IBID

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February 4, 2026

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Guthrie and Ranking Member Pallone,

As organizations representing parents, families, and advocates across the country, we write to advocate for the passage of the App Store Accountability Act (ASAA). This commonsense legislation would give parents the tools they need to guide their children's digital lives while protecting privacy.

Today, children can download virtually any app without their parents' knowledge or consent. Apps require young users to agree to complex terms of service, often allowing access to age-inappropriate online experiences. Without this knowledge, parents are left out of the conversation entirely. This system fails families, leaving kids vulnerable to both unsafe content and privacy risks.

The App Store Accountability Act offers a simple solution by bringing security and verification to the app store level. App stores would verify a user's age when they create an account. When a child wants to download an app, parents would receive a notification and can approve or deny the request, similar to how app stores already alert parents when their child attempts to make a purchase. Before granting consent, parents would receive clear information about what data the app collects and the app's age rating. This approach empowers parents without burdening them, allowing families to manage their child's app access in one place rather than navigating countless platforms.

Centralizing age verification at the app store also reduces privacy risks. Under the current system, and under proposals requiring app-by-app verification, families must hand over sensitive personal information to dozens of companies, each representing a potential point of data exposure. The App Store Accountability Act consolidates this process: verify age once at the app store, and individual apps simply receive confirmation of a user's age category and parental consent status.

ALLvanza recently conducted a national poll among 1,150 registered voters with a focus on parents and Latino parents. The findings confirm that voters—particularly parents—strongly support legislation that requires parental approval for minors to download apps and to verify users' ages. Eighty-two percent of voters support this legislation, including 85% of parents and 79% of Latino parents. The poll also shows that support plummets for alternative proposals that do not require parental approval and would only require app stores to collect users' self-reported ages; just 28% of voters support this proposal, while 62% oppose it.

A uniform federal standard ensures all families receive the same protections regardless of where they live. There are many other well-intentioned proposals to protect kids online, but some fall short of the ASAA's simplicity and efficacy. Some of the other proposals you are considering rely on users to self-report their own age, allowing children to easily bypass protections by falsely stating their age. Some of these same proposals don't include any parental approval mechanisms at all, or the approval mechanisms they do include lack the simplicity and efficacy of the ASAA. Minimizing or shirking parental approval as a tool to protect teens online ignores what parents are clearly clamoring for. The App Store

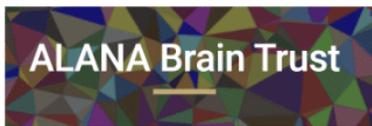
Accountability Act puts parents in control by requiring actual verification and parental approval, all in one centralized place, ensuring its protections actually work.

The App Store Accountability Act represents a constitutionally sound approach to protecting children online while respecting First Amendment rights. Unlike other recently challenged laws that directly regulate speech content on social media platforms, this legislation focuses on a simple procedural requirement: giving parents the tools to oversee their children’s app downloads. The bill doesn’t restrict what content can be shared, doesn’t favor certain viewpoints over others, and applies equally to all apps and app stores. Courts have consistently recognized that laws regulating conduct—rather than speech itself—receive more lenient constitutional review, and requiring parental consent for app downloads is fundamentally about conduct, not expression. There are no exemptions or carve-outs in the federal bill—something that has held up similar legislation in other states.

Parents across the country want centralized age verification and a simple approval mechanism. The App Store Accountability Act delivers exactly that: a practical, privacy-protective framework that puts parents back in control. We advocate for the passage of this legislation that will deliver meaningful protections for American families.

Allianza

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
ARIZONA**



STREET GRACE™





ALLvanza
AFT Arizona
ALANA Community Brain Trust
American Latino Veterans Association (ALVA), The
Aspira
Aware Now Media
Black History Project
Black Institute, The
Black Men of New York, Inc., 100
CA Consumer Voice
CA Families for Online Protections
California Parents for Public Virtual Education
Colorado Children's Alliance
Colorado Children's Campaign
E.R.I.C. Initiative Foundation
Equal Ground
Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses
Greater Chicagoland Black Chamber of Commerce
Health Care Advocacy Coalition of California
Hispanic 100
Interfaith Action Movement
Kempe Foundation
Legacy Coordination Network
Living Evergreen
MANA-A National Latina Organization
McBride Impact
National Hispanic Health Foundation
PA Unplugged
Parent Support for Online Learning
Plumaje
Prevention Action Alliance
Senior Voices NW
Source LGBT+ Center, The
Street Grace
Transplant Recipients International Organization
Urban Warriors
WA Health Equity Alliance
We the People for Education
Yankee Institute

February 4, 2026



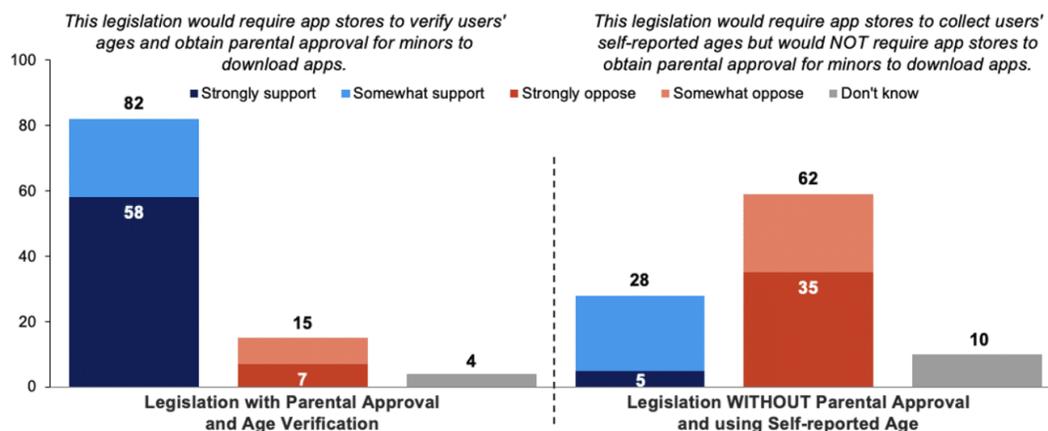
To: Interested Parties

Fr: Impact Research

Re: New Poll Finds Overwhelming Support for Key Components of the App Store Accountability Act

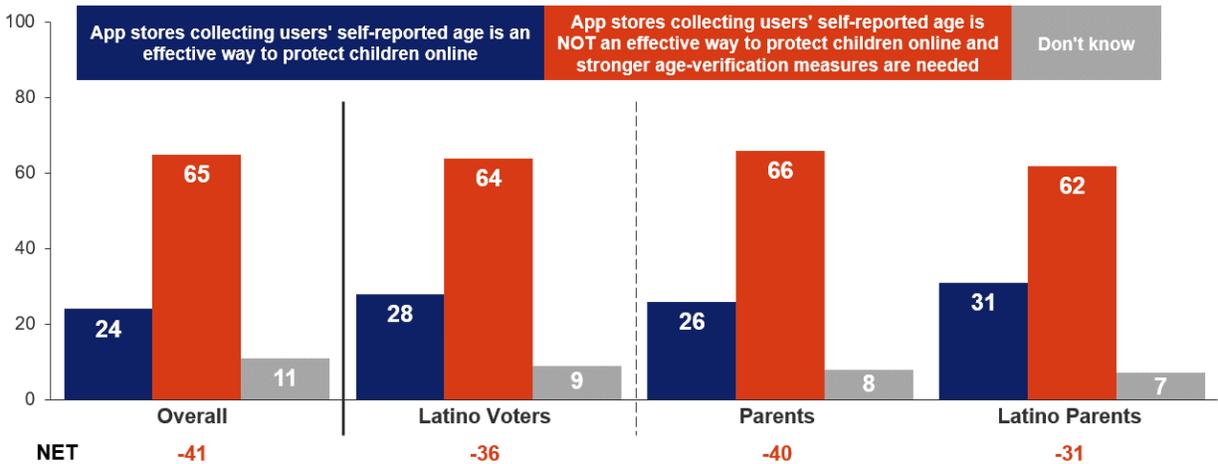
A new nationwide poll finds overwhelming support for legislation requiring app stores to verify users' ages and obtain parental approval for minors to download apps. Support is overwhelming across the board and notable among key subgroups – including parents and Latino parents. The poll also reveals clear preferences for a centralized approach to age verification that goes beyond collecting users' self-reported age. Below are some key findings from the poll:

- **There is overwhelming support for legislation requiring app stores to verify users' ages and obtain parental approval for minors to download apps.** 82% of voters support this legislation, including 85% of parents and 79% of Latino parents. Support also transcends partisanship, with 77% of Democrats, 90% of Republicans, and 80% of Independents in favor of this legislation.
 - The App Store Accountability Act is also politically motivating. 60% of voters say they would be more likely to support a member of Congress who supports this legislation, while just 13% say they would be less likely to do so.
- **Parental approval is extremely popular and helps drive support for legislation.** 83% of voters and 85% of parents support requiring app stores to obtain parental approval for minors to download apps.
 - When asked about alternative legislation that would not require parental approval and would collect users' self-reported ages, support drops by 54 points to just 28%, with 62% opposed. Among parents, the decline is even bigger, with support falling 61 points (from 85% to 24%).



- **Voters reject that collecting users' self-reported ages is effective for keeping children safe online.** Nearly two thirds of voters (65%) say app stores collecting users' self-reported age is not an effective way to protect children online and that stronger age-verification measures are needed, while just 24% believe that collecting self-reported ages is an effective approach. This position is firmly held by Latino voters and parents as well.

Which of the following statements come closest to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



- Parents express a clear preference for age verification in an app store over individual apps.**
 - By an 18-point margin, parents say they would prefer to verify age in one place, such as an app store (56%) rather than separately in each individual app (38%). Latino parents prefer verifying users' ages in one place by a 25-point margin (58% app store / 33% individual apps).
 - A majority of parents (64%) also say they would trust app stores more than individual apps (22%) to securely handle the personal data needed to verify users' ages.

These findings are based on the results of a live and text to web survey conducted by Impact Research from January 4-11, 2026, among N=1,150 registered voters nationwide. The survey included 800 registered voters along with oversamples of 250 parents (for a total of 477 parents) and 100 Latino parents (for a total of 157). The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and was weighted to reflect the demographic and partisan makeup of registered voters nationwide. The full sample has a margin of error of ±3.5%.

###

ALLvanza is a nonpartisan, forward-thinking, policy and action nonprofit organization that advocates for the success of all Americans in our innovation- and technology-based society.

The poll was conducted by Impact Research, a leading progressive public opinion research firm.



December 10, 2025

Dear Chairman Guthrie, Chairman Bilirakis, and members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee,

I want to thank you for your commitment to finding the most practical solutions to protect children's innocence and strengthen parents' rights online. Having helped pass age verification laws for online pornography websites in 24 states, we know even the simplest attempts to protect children in the digital realm still face enormous pushback. Accordingly, we urge your committee to prioritize two workable models that have already succeeded at the state level: the SCREEN Act and the App Store Accountability Act.

As it stands, children are often just one or two taps away from exposure to violent and inappropriate content online. We've seen kids driven to suicide by manipulative AI chatbots like Character.AI that hijack their emotions and isolate them from family life. We've seen disgusting amounts of increasingly extreme pornography reach young kids, normalizing crude violence and distorting men's attitudes toward women. All of it is unacceptable—but, with pro-family, privacy-preserving safeguards, most of this harm is preventable.

No tech company, whether an AI developer or porn-tech conglomerate, should profit from stealing children's innocence. Congress can end this pernicious practice in one fell swoop by passing the SCREEN Act and the App Store Accountability Act and – two complementary age verification measures that cordon off kids' access to inappropriate material at two key chokepoints: pornography websites and app stores.

There is no question that young kids' easy access to online adult content is an emergency that must be addressed—according to one recent study, the average age of first exposure is now just 12 years old. Responding to the well-documented harms associated with pornography use, the SCREEN Act requires commercial porn websites to implement age verification measures to prevent underage access, requiring secure and transparent collection of verifiable age data.

By forcing porn companies to take seriously their responsibility to ensure graphic depictions of sexual encounters do not reach impressionable minors, the bill aligns commercial practices online with widely accepted real-world standards. We expect even the seediest adult store on the side of the highway not to sell sexual products to an unaccompanied minor; the same standard should apply online.

Currently, meaningful age-verification is also wholly absent from today's app stores. A kid taps "agree and install," and suddenly a developer has access to their microphone, location,

data, and camera. This isn't just an unconscionable invasion of privacy—it's a violation of basic tenets of contract law and an erosion of parental rights.

The App Store Accountability Act has a simple premise: like any local corner store, Apple's and Google's app stores should be responsible for verifying a user's age before allowing access to potentially inappropriate or age-restricted content.

Recognizing that content and privacy risks are not always cut and dry, the App Store Accountability Act holds all platforms—including social media companies, AI chatbots, and every other app available for download—to the same standards while avoiding blanket censorship and empowering parents to determine whether a platform aligns with their child's maturity and family's values.

This family-centered posture and responsible use of age data that Apple and Google already collect makes the App Store Accountability Act technically feasible, narrowly tailored, and minimally burdensome.

These two measures work together; even with pornography websites locked down, disgusting nudifying apps, violent video games, and predatory anonymous messaging platforms remain readily available, systematically mislabeled, and deceptively marketed to kids on app stores. And seemingly harmless apps can contain backdoor browsers that allow kids to bypass filters and access hardcore porn. That's why Congress must prioritize targeted age verification measures tailored to each landscape.

As the Supreme Court ruled this summer in *Free Speech Coalition v. Paxton*, age-verification is an "ordinary and appropriate" means of protecting kids online. By implementing age verification at two high traffic digital junctures—porn websites and app stores—Congress can defend kids' innocence and strengthen future generations of American families. I urge you to support and pass the SCREEN Act and the App Store Accountability Act this session.

Sincerely,

Terry Schilling
President
American Principles Project



The Honorable Gus M. Bilirakis
U.S. House of Representatives
2306 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

September 2, 2025

Dear Congressman Bilirakis:

On behalf of Pinterest, thank you for your leadership on the App Store Accountability Act (H.R. 3149/S.1586). I am writing to express our strong endorsement of this legislation and to urge its swift passage.

Over 570 million users come to Pinterest every month to find inspiration and create a life they love. Gen Z represents over 50% of our userbase, and ensuring young people have safe experiences that support their wellbeing on Pinterest is imperative to our platform and business. That is why we have heavily invested in age-appropriate protections and experiences for young people. This work includes making all accounts belonging to those under 16 private only, and intentionally designing our recommendation systems to prioritize positive, inspirational content.

The App Store Accountability Act establishes a clear, nationwide approach to age assurance at the app-store level. Notably, the Act requires age verification and parental consent for minors, empowers app stores and developers to exchange key information, and avoids a patchwork of conflicting state laws. This approach prevents young people from accessing non-age appropriate apps, provides parents with a single consent experience, and enables developers to receive consistent age signals. The Act's uniform framework is uniquely practical for families and industry.

This legislation also aligns with the [public position](#) I have articulated many times: the status quo for online safety does not work for American families. We must make age assurance simple, privacy-protective, and consistent. The App Store Accountability Act is a pragmatic step in that direction, and we stand ready to partner with you and with app-store providers to implement it in ways that are effective for families and respectful of user privacy.

The need for a federal standard is urgent. States have already begun passing divergent age verification requirements, creating a fast-moving patchwork that creates inconsistencies and confusion for users and complicates compliance for platforms and developers. A single national approach would reduce fragmentation while giving families one simple place to approve the apps their teens download.

Passage of this important law will serve as a vital step toward ensuring we are shaping a future where the internet is a positive and inspirational space for all. At Pinterest, we are deeply committed to moving this critical work forward. We applaud your leadership on the App Store Accountability Act and encourage Congress to prioritize its passage this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Ready', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Bill Ready
CEO, Pinterest



The Honorable John James
U.S. House of Representatives
1519 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

September 2, 2025

Dear Congressman James:

On behalf of Pinterest, thank you for your leadership on the App Store Accountability Act (H.R. 3149). I am writing to express our strong endorsement of this legislation and to urge its swift passage.

Over 570 million users come to Pinterest every month to find inspiration and create a life they love. Gen Z represents over 50% of our userbase, and ensuring young people have safe experiences that support their wellbeing on Pinterest is imperative to our platform and business. That is why we have heavily invested in age-appropriate protections and experiences for young people. This work includes making all accounts belonging to those under 16 private only, and intentionally designing our recommendation systems to prioritize positive, inspirational content.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Ready', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Bill Ready
CEO, Pinterest

CONCERNED
WOMEN *for* AMERICA
LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

November 3, 2025

Dear member of the Energy and Commerce Committee,

On behalf of Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee (CWALAC), the largest public policy women's organization in the country, I write in strong support of the App Store Accountability Act sponsored by Rep. John James (R-Michigan) and Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah).

This bill would empower parents to protect their children from inappropriate, age-restricted materials by implementing parental controls in app stores. This measure has received overwhelming support nationwide with polls suggesting 82% approval from voters.

Children are protected from purchasing inappropriate products in their local corner stores, but such protections do not exist in one of the most dangerous marketplaces of them all: the internet. Because of this, app stores regularly expose young children to explicit and violent content without their parents' knowledge. Additionally, age ratings on app stores are often inaccurate, and minors frequently sign away private information through confusing user agreements.

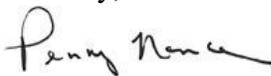
The App Store Accountability Act would protect children by empowering parents as the drivers of these decisions. The bill ensures parents a private right of action against app stores that fail to:

- Require for parental consent on age-registered materials
- Provide clear age ratings and descriptions of the apps available for download
- Allow parents to filter what their children can access on these markets

The lack of Congressional action in the rapidly developing marketplace has allowed app stores to exploit children to new, dangerous heights, and it has placed parents in a helpless position. That is a reality our members at Concerned Women for America know all too well.

We are proud to represent parents across the nation who stand firmly for Biblical values and earnestly seek to provide their children with the protective measures they deserve. But in a marketplace as diverse and accessible as the app store, it is nearly impossible for parents to stay on top of every trap awaiting their child online. That is why age rating displays and parental notification are a critical step forward, and one we are proud to endorse on behalf of our members.

Sincerely,



Penny Young Nance
CEO and President
Concerned Women for America LAC

P.O. BOX 34300 □ WASHINGTON, D.C. 20043 □ (202)488-7000
CONCERNEDWOMEN.ORG



March 5, 2026

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
House Energy & Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Energy & Commerce Committee
2323 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Guthrie and Ranking Member Pallone:

APPA writes in strong support of H.R. 7266, the Rural and Municipal Utility Cybersecurity Act. APPA also appreciates the committee's work on the other cybersecurity bills under consideration today, including H.R. 7258, the Energy Emergency Leadership Act, H.R. 7257, the Securing Community Upgrades for a Resilient Grid Act, H.R. 7272, the Pipeline Cybersecurity Preparedness Act, and H.R. 7305, the Energy Threat Analysis Center Act.

APPA is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 2,000 towns and cities nationwide. APPA represents public power before the federal government to protect the interests of the more than 55 million people that public power utilities serve in 49 states and five territories, and the 100,000 people they employ. Public power utilities account for 15 percent of all sales of electric energy (kilowatt-hours) to end-use consumers and are load-serving entities with the primary goal of providing the communities they serve with safe and reliable electric service at the lowest reasonable cost.

Enacted in 2021, the Rural and Municipal Advanced Cybersecurity Grant and Technical Assistance (RMUC) Program was authorized and appropriated \$250 million in grants and technical assistance over five years to rural, municipal, and small investor-owned electric utilities to enhance their security posture. APPA believes the program is a once in a generation opportunity to improve the cybersecurity of under-resourced, not-for-profit utilities that should be extended and expanded.

Through RMUC, APPA received a four-year, \$4 million cooperative agreement to establish the Cyber Pathways Program. This program is designed to support public power utilities with cybersecurity assessments, training, and a new cybersecurity designation program to recognize utilities implementing cybersecurity best practices. Cyber Pathways focuses on resource-limited public power utilities, connecting them with cybersecurity resources, and improving their cyber maturity and incident response capabilities.

The program has realized several successes, such as the completion of a legal framework for utility cybersecurity assessment data, which outlines the specific rights and protections for assessment data to ensure utilities are aware of who has what right to their data; a report on cybersecurity frameworks in use by public power utilities, which was based on a survey of public power utilities to identify experiences in using existing cybersecurity frameworks and assessments to identify the unique needs of smaller, resource-limited utilities who are often poorly served by more complex cybersecurity frameworks; cybersecurity training for dozens of public power utility employees at the Safe Haven mutual aid exercises; and steady progress developing the Cybersecurity Accelerator Program (CAP) designation program to improve the cybersecurity maturity of public power entities. Going forward, APPA will develop publications and resources for utilities to improve and test their cyber incident response plans;

provide additional cybersecurity trainings; and work with members through CAP to improve their cyber posture.

APPA has also been selected for negotiation of a financial assistance award under the DE-FOA-0002986 Advanced Cybersecurity Technology (ACT) Funding Opportunity Announcement. APPA's proposal for Topic Area 3 – Enhancing the Cybersecurity Incident Response Capabilities of the Municipal Utility Workforce, would award \$2 million over four years to improve cybersecurity incident response capabilities at 19 utilities that agreed to participate. With this funding, APPA would be able to assess utilities' cybersecurity incident response policies, procedures, and plans and then work with participants to improve and then test these protocols through exercises; develop customized cybersecurity incident response training; and, develop a cybersecurity incident response toolkit.

APPA believes there is much more to do to build on the successes achieved thus far in the RMUC program. As such, APPA strongly supports the RMUC Act, which would reauthorize the program through 2030 and authorize \$250 million in appropriations.

The industry's commitment to security and its willingness to work with both public and private partners across all sectors to address all hazards is a constant effort. We appreciate the bipartisan support that grid security legislation historically has enjoyed in this committee and more broadly in Congress and the work you have done to enhance the energy sector's security posture. We look forward to working together to continue to build critical infrastructure security and resilience for the safety, security, and well-being of all Americans.

Sincerely,



Scott Corwin
President and CEO



March 5, 2026

Dear Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, and members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce,

We, the undersigned coalition of child advocacy organizations, formally endorse the App Store Accountability Act and respectfully urge your support during the upcoming committee markup.

Parents want to keep their children safe, but they are battling a broken system. As the gatekeepers to the digital world, app stores have allowed children to download apps with potentially inappropriate content without their parents ever knowing. In the process, children are able to agree to complex contracts that grant sweeping access to their microphone, exact location, browsing history, and more.

The App Store Accountability Act is the right approach to protect kids online. Recognizing that minors should not agree to binding contracts with billion-dollar companies, this legislation would require secure, privacy-preserving age verification at the app-store level, by leveraging existing data management and privacy mechanisms. It would also give parents a clear way to review and manage the apps their kids can access and ensure accurate age-rating information so they can make informed choices about which platforms are appropriate.

Importantly, the App Store Accountability Act accomplishes the goal of protecting children online in a content-neutral manner that does not encroach constitutional rights to free speech and privacy.

This privacy-preserving child safety measure has overwhelming, bipartisan support from parents. A national poll by the Digital Childhood Alliance found that [88% of parents nationwide](#) want app stores to require parental approval before minors can download any app. Support for the App Store Accountability Act crosses party lines, with 86% of Republicans and 80% of Democrats in support. Notably, [additional polling data](#) shows that support drops sharply when parental approval is removed or when age verification relies solely on self-reported ages, like in other bills like the inferior Parents Over Platforms Act (POPA).

The bipartisan momentum for the App Store Accountability Act continues to grow. Last month, Alabama signed this bill into law after passing the legislature unanimously. Four states have already signed the App Store Accountability Act into law, and more than a dozen additional states are considering the bill this session. The time is now for Congress to step up to protect every child across the country and hold app marketplaces accountable by passing the App Store Accountability Act.

Additionally, we encourage a more narrowly tailored preemption clause within the bill and urge you to push this legislation forward in Congress.

Thank you for your commitment to making our digital world safer for children and more manageable for parents. We continue to passionately support this bill and are available to assist in any means necessary to ensure the App Store Accountability Act becomes law.

Sincerely,

Digital Childhood Alliance

3Strands Global Foundation
A Butterfly Gets Her Wings Back LLC
ACLJ Action
Addo Recovery - Washington
AL Citizen Action Program
Alabama Family Project
Alaska Family Council
Alaska State Representative Sarah Vance
Alexander Neville Foundation
All Girls Allowed, Inc.
Allies Against Slavery
American Principles Project
American Youth Association
ANEW Life International
Anna McAdams
Association of Ministers in Utah
Better Screen Time
Better Tech Project
Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition
Black Americans United for Tennessee
Bowman Therapeutics
Breaking Generational Cycles
CA Survivor Coalition
California Family Policy Council
Call to Freedom, Inc.
Center for Arizona Policy
Center for Christian Virtue
Center for Innovation and Free Enterprise
Chains Interrupted
Child First Policy Center
Children at Risk
Citizens for Renewing America
Clare Morell
Concerned Women for America LAC
CORAFID Centre for Innovation and Research
David's Legacy Foundation
Defend Young Minds
DejaVuAI Inc.
Delaware Family Policy Council
Demand Disruption
Digital Childhood Institute
Digital Progress Institute
Dignity Defense Institute
Dr. Jill Manning, PLLC
Drew Boa Coaching LLC
Eagle Venture Fund
Ed & Nancy Hanenburg Children's Advocacy Center
Educate and Empower Kids
Elijah Rising
Empowered Parents Utah
Evan Swarztrauber

Family Policy Alliance
Freedom Church Alliance
Frontline Policy
GenFree: Unplugging 2 Connect
Georgia Center for Opportunity
GoSendMe Global
G-Rated School
Greenway Recovery
Growing Unified Development (GUD)
Guided Purposes, LLC
Hannah's Hope
Hawaii Family Forum
Healthy Screen Habits
Heritage Action
Hookers For Jesus
Hope Against Trafficking
Hope Connecting Purpose
Hope of Utah
Igniting Ember, Inc
Indiana Family Institute
Indiana University College Republicans
Innocence en Danger - Sellier
Kansas Family Voice
Kentucky Family Foundation
KIDS TOO
Kingdom Forerunners
Latino Hope
Latinos for Tennessee
Liberty Leaders Unite
Louisiana Family Forum
Lynn's Warriors
Magdalene House Austin
Massachusetts Family Institute
Mayor Melissa Elliott, Henderson, NC
Meg Leta Jones
Michigan Anti-Trafficking Project
Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools (MANS)
Minnesota Family Council
Moms for America, Utah
Moms for Liberty (National)
Moms for Liberty Alabama
Moms for Liberty, Howard County Indiana
Montana Family Foundation
More Too Life
National Association of Christian Lawmakers
National Association of Social Workers - Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas Chapters
NC Family Policy Council
NC Stop Human Trafficking
Nebraska Family Alliance
New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking
New York Families Action

NJ Family Policy Center
No Trafficking Zone
North Carolina Family Policy Council
Not On Our Watch Texas
Nurses United Against Human Trafficking
Oklahoma Rural Association
Operation Parent KY
Palmetto Family Alliance
Paradigm Shift Training and Consulting
Parents Who Fight
Path Forward Utah
Paving the Way Foundation
Pennsylvania Family Council
Pennsylvania Grange
Power 2 Parent Nevada
Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky
Project STAND
Protect Life Michigan
Protect Young Eyes
Protecting the Gift
Rainey Center
Refuge for Women Chicago
Resiliency Foundation
Rest Stop Ministries
Restore the Child, PLLC
Revelation & Restoration
Runaway Girl
Scarlet Road
Scrolling 2 Death
Sex Trade Survivor Caucus
Shield North Carolina
Skull Games
Smart Families
Society for the Improvement of Rural People (SIRP)
South Dakota Family Voice Action
Southwest Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking
Street Grace
Survivor Leader Network of San Diego
Swimming UpScreen
Talk More. Tech Less.
Tame Your Tech
Tech Safe Solutions LLC
Texans Care for Children
Texas Baptists' Christian Life Commission
Texas Pastor Council
Texas Public Policy Foundation
Texas Values
Texas Youth Foundation
TexProtects
The Commons
The FAMiLY Leader (Iowa)

The Freeman Project Safe Housing
The Hope Foundation
The Institute for Family Studies
The Legacy Society
The Stop Trafficking Project®
The WellHouse
Tin Man Ministries
Tina Descovich
Traffick911
Trafficking in America Task Force
Transformation Garden
Truth in Education
Unbound Now
Utah Citizens for the Constitution
Utah Eagle Forum
Utah Legislative Watch
Utah Parents United
Utah Women's Forum, Salt Lake
Vessels of Mercy International, Inc.
Victims2Survivors – U.S.
Walk Her Home
White Ribbon Week
Wisconsin Family Action
Wyoming Family Alliance
Yellowstone Human Trafficking Task Force
Zoe Ministries of Delaware

cc: Speaker Mike Johnson
House Majority Leader Steve Scalise
House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries
House Energy & Commerce Committee



Phone: (586)946-3080

Web: www.map-mi.org

Address: P.O Box 180032
Utica, MI 48318

February 25, 2026

Dear Members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee,

On behalf of the Michigan Anti-Trafficking Project, we write in strong support of the App Store Accountability Act (H.R. 3149 / S. 1586). Our organization works statewide to prevent human trafficking, educate communities, and support survivors of exploitation. One reality is unmistakable: recruitment and grooming of minors increasingly begins online.

Trafficking no longer requires physical proximity. Today, it often starts with a direct message, a gaming app chat, or a social media connection. Teens now spend nearly five hours per day online and use roughly 40 different apps each week. This digital exposure creates unprecedented access for individuals seeking to exploit children, while parents are left with limited tools to prevent it.

The data is sobering. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children reported a 300 percent increase in online enticement cases between 2021 and 2023. In 2024 alone, the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force supported approximately 203,000 investigations, resulting in more than 12,600 arrests nationwide.

Support for survivors and prosecution remains essential, but prevention at the point of access is critical. By the time families or law enforcement discover exploitation, significant trauma has already occurred.

The App Store Accountability Act addresses this vulnerability by requiring app stores to verify a user's age, obtain parental consent before minors download apps or make in-app purchases, and apply standardized age ratings. These measures create a meaningful checkpoint that strengthens parental oversight and reduces unsupervised access to tools commonly used in grooming and recruitment.

Human trafficking is adaptive. As technology evolves, recruitment tactics evolve with it. The App Store Accountability Act is a practical, preventive step to reduce opportunities for exploitation before a child becomes a victim.

We respectfully urge Congress to advance this legislation to protect children and combat trafficking in Michigan and across the nation.

Sincerely, Michigan Anti-Trafficking Project

Leyna Luttrull

*Board Member,
Michigan Anti-Trafficking Project*

February 4, 2026

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Latta
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kathy Castor
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Latta, and Ranking Member Castor:

On behalf of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), I write in strong support of H.R. 7266, the Rural and Municipal Utility Cybersecurity Act, H.R. 7258, the Energy Emergency Leadership Act, and H.R. 7305, the Energy Threat Analysis Center Act. We appreciate the Committee's diligent work and holistic approach to ensure rural electric cooperatives can continue defending critical energy infrastructure against evolving cyber threats.

NRECA is the national trade association representing America's 900 rural electric cooperatives, focused on delivering affordable, reliable, and secure electricity to over 42 million Americans in the hardest to reach parts of our country. We are unique in the electric utility sector in that we are private, independent businesses that operate without profit incentives and are owned and governed by the people we serve.

The same challenges that made electrifying rural America difficult nearly a century ago continue to complicate modern cybersecurity efforts. The legislation before the Committee helps cooperatives overcome these challenges – particularly the Rural and Municipal Utility Cybersecurity Act, which strengthens federal partnerships, enhances threat-intelligence sharing, and provides targeted funding to invest in the people, processes, and technologies needed to secure the grid.

We appreciate the Committee's leadership and bipartisan commitment to enhancing national security by improving the cybersecurity posture of rural electric cooperatives. NRECA urges swift passage of the RMUC Act and the other legislation before the Committee and stands ready to support your continued efforts to secure the grid.

Sincerely,



Jim Matheson



House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

March 5, 2026

Dear Committee on Energy and Commerce Members,

The Woodhull Freedom Foundation writes to express our opposition to the Kids Internet and Digital Safety Act (KIDS Act), H.R. 7757, incorporating an amended version of the SCREEN Act, H.R. 1623, imposing mandatory age and identity verification to access adult content online. Woodhull is a nonprofit organization dedicated to defending sexual freedom as a fundamental human right, and our work centers on protecting free expression, privacy, and bodily autonomy. While we share Congress's stated goal of protecting children and teens online, we are deeply concerned that this legislation would undermine fundamental civil liberties without meaningfully improving youth safety.

As we have warned about similar proposals, including earlier versions of the Kids Online Safety Act, legislation built on broad "duty of care" requirements risks turning platforms into censors of lawful speech. The KIDS Act defines potential harms to minors so broadly that platforms will inevitably over-moderate or block entirely legal content to avoid liability. Information about sexual and reproductive health, LGBTQ+ identities, and other topics that young people often seek online could be swept up in these restrictions. When faced with vague legal mandates and significant penalties, companies have historically taken the safest route for themselves, not for users, by suppressing constitutionally protected speech.

Congress has already seen how this dynamic plays out. In 2018, lawmakers passed the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act and the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (SESTA/FOSTA) to address the serious problem of human trafficking. In practice, the law has been largely ineffective in prosecuting trafficking cases, as documented in a 2021 report by the Government Accountability Office. Instead, it has led to widespread removal of lawful speech online. Woodhull funded [peer-reviewed research](#) documenting how platforms censored constitutionally protected expression to avoid liability under SESTA/FOSTA, and our organization [challenged the law in federal court](#) on First Amendment and due process grounds. The courts ultimately warned that the statute must be interpreted narrowly to avoid "grave constitutional questions." The lesson from SESTA/FOSTA is clear: **broad internet regulation aimed at protecting vulnerable populations often results in sweeping censorship without solving the underlying problem.**

The KIDS Act also raises serious privacy concerns because it will likely pressure platforms to implement age and identity verification systems in order to comply with its mandates. Woodhull's research initiative, [Fact Checked by Woodhull](#), has examined the growing wave of age-verification proposals and their impact on free expression and privacy. Our analysis demonstrates that online age



verification is [not comparable to “flashing an ID at a liquor store.”](#) In practice, digital verification systems require users to submit sensitive personal information—such as government identification, biometric data, or facial scans to third-party companies, creating significant risks of surveillance, data breaches, and identity theft. These systems chill lawful speech by forcing people to surrender their anonymity before accessing constitutionally protected material.

Fact Checked by Woodhull has also documented how age-verification mandates inevitably [limit speech online](#) by forcing websites and platforms to restrict access to lawful content or remove it entirely, rather than incur the financial and legal burdens of verification systems. When speech is conditioned on identification and monitoring, many users, particularly those seeking information about sexuality, reproductive health, or LGBTQ+ identity, simply stop accessing that information. Further, minors and adults seeking sexually-oriented content will instead be incentivized to access unregulated, foreign adult platforms where they risk exploitation, exposure to illegal materials, and other dangers. The result is not a safer internet, but a more censored one.

Protecting children online is an important goal, but it must not come at the expense of the constitutional rights of everyone else. Policies that undermine privacy, encourage surveillance, and pressure platforms to remove lawful speech will ultimately harm both adults and young people who rely on the internet for information, connection, and community. We urge Congress to pursue solutions that empower families, support digital literacy, and address genuine harms without eroding the First Amendment or Americans’ right to privacy.

For these reasons, the Woodhull Freedom Foundation respectfully urges you to vote no on the Kids Internet and Digital Safety Act unless its threats to freedom of expression and privacy are addressed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ricci Joy Levy".

Ricci Joy Levy
President & CEO
Woodhull Freedom Foundation



Affirming Sexual Freedom as a Fundamental Human Right

woodhullfoundation.org

This point of view can be attributed to Peter Chandler, Executive Director of Internet Works. Internet Works is a coalition of 28 technology companies working together to right-size regulatory technology policy to foster trust and promote safety online so that the Internet remains a place of limitless possibility and innovation.

“As the leading voice for Middle Tech, Internet Works believes that everyone in the tech ecosystem has an important role in keeping kids safe online. For years, we have worked with policymakers at the state and federal level to advance legislation that implements age assurance at the app store level. We believe that age assurance at the app store level provides much needed clarity to app developers to strengthen their efforts to protect kids and empower parents. We appreciate the commitment from the bipartisan members of this Committee who are tackling this difficult challenge. Internet Works has engaged with members on both sides of the aisle, and while we are still reviewing the details of the revised app store proposal, we applaud the Committee for working with Middle Tech to constructively improve legislation that protects children online. We look forward to working with all members of the House to advance our shared mission of a safer Internet for kids. We believe app store level age assurance is an important step forward to protect kids online.”



January 12, 2026

Chairman Latta
Ranking Member Castor
Energy Subcommittee
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: NASEO Letter in Support of SECURE Grid Act/Hearing *Protecting America’s Energy Infrastructure in Today’s Cyber and Physical Threat Landscape* (January 13, 2026)

Dear Chairman Latta and Ranking Member Castor:

On behalf of the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO), I write to express our strong support for the *Securing Community Upgrades for a Resilient Grid Act* (SECURE Grid Act), which the Subcommittee will consider at its January 13, 2026, legislative hearing. NASEO represents the State Energy Offices in all 50 states, the territories, and District of Columbia. We strongly endorse this bipartisan legislation which reflects the very positive work of Chairman Latta and Representative Matsui. NASEO appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments, and we thank the Committee staff for their continued engagement.

One of the key activities of the State Energy Offices is supporting our nation’s protection from cyber security and physical security threats. The SECURE Grid Act will help us move forward in this arena, building on the language contained in earlier energy legislation. For example, 2021 legislation built upon language contained in a 1990 statute, which made energy emergency and energy security planning a mandatory feature of the U.S. State Energy Program (SEP) (PL 101-440). The SECURE Grid Act will extend that additional authority, along with authority for electricity transmission and distribution system planning, through 2030. This timeframe provides states with a practical planning horizon to carry out work in support of the Act’s goals and regular updating of state energy security plans.

Since the 2021 statute was passed, all State Energy Offices, NASEO, and the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response (CESER) worked together—under gubernatorial oversight—to update state energy security plans. When the legislation was developed in 2015, on a bipartisan basis, the Committee recognized the importance of these issues, as well as the determinative role of the governors who lead emergency planning and response efforts in their states. The 2021 statute was a clear advance.

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The SECURE Grid Act furthers these efforts by ensuring that states' electric distribution security planning keeps pace with rapidly evolving cyber and physical threats to our nation's grid. The threat actors have expanded and the need for state energy emergency planning that helps energy providers becomes more critical every day—our adversaries are not resting. The states' grid planning work is especially important as utilities are called upon to integrate unprecedented new loads, in such areas as manufacturing, data centers, and critical defense installations. The protection of our energy infrastructure is a shared responsibility of state, local, and federal governments, as well as the private sector. The governors have been very engaged and supportive of this process.

The legislation also ensures continued leveraging of CESER's highly effective work and partnership with the states and energy providers. Ongoing collaboration among CESER, State Energy Offices, utilities, and fuel providers is essential not only to improving preparedness, but also to restoring grid and fuel operations—utilizing robust state energy security plans—as quickly as possible when disruptions occur.

The strong bipartisan support of this Subcommittee, as well as the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittees in the House and Senate, for SEP is critical to the national interest.

NASEO also endorses the other bills being considered by the Subcommittee at the hearing on January 13, 2026: 1) *Energy Emergency Leadership Act*; 2) *Energy Threat Analysis Center Act of 2026*; 3) *Rural and Municipal Utility Cybersecurity Act*; and 4) *Pipeline and Cybersecurity Preparedness Act*. Each of these bills benefits from, and further reinforces, CESER's valuable partnership with State Energy Offices and the nation's energy providers. We recommend a minor modification to the *Energy Threat Analysis Center Act of 2026* in Section 2(3)(A). You should consider ensuring that the provision of "information" be on a purely discretionary basis, but that "assistance" be on a formula basis to governmental entities to ensure that all states and private entities within the states move forward together in trying to avert energy security threats.

NASEO members from all the states have greatly appreciated the bipartisan support of the SECURE Grid Act, and the truly professional support provide by both the Committee staff on both sides of the aisle and the personal staff regarding this critical legislation. We are prepared to respond to any questions and would be happy to brief the Members and staff on state actions to advance our national security.

We hope this legislation can move forward to enactment very quickly. We request that this statement be placed in the hearing record.

Respectfully Submitted,



David Terry
President, NASEO

cc: The Honorable Brett Guthrie
The Honorable Frank Pallone
State Energy Director



Online Age Verification Is Not the Same as 'Flashing Your ID at a Liquor Store'

Several states have enacted laws that require visitors to sites with “material harmful to minors” to verify their age, usually by uploading a government-issued ID, submitting a facial scan or other biometrics, or allowing a third party to verify identity via a credit bureau or other database. While these policies are ostensibly designed to prevent children from viewing age-inappropriate adult content online, opponents claim they obstruct the right to free speech granted by the First Amendment and have a constrictive effect on adults' ability to access legal content.

Proponents of the laws maintain that uploading one's ID to access content online is no different than flashing your ID at the liquor store cashier. However, research suggests this is not the case. Specifically:

- In-person ID checks do not store the individual's data in a database
- Sharing personally identifying information over the internet can allow third parties access to the information en route and at the destination.
- Even programs that endeavor to protect users' private information admit the potential for hacking or data breaches.¹
- The process of uploading an ID or undergoing other verification processes is often difficult and complicated, and the loss of anonymity may work to dissuade adults from accessing legal content.

Obviously, these concerns are not a risk at liquor stores where no record is kept that includes the actual ID. Further, tying one's ID to sensitive, sexually explicit content creates the risk of exploitation and extortion that does not exist in the liquor store analogy. Lastly, purchasing liquor is not a constitutionally protected activity, while viewing adult content is protected by the First Amendment.

¹ Yar, 2019

Protecting children from age-inappropriate material online is important. However, when laws and regulations significantly burden adults' access to otherwise legal ideas, information, art, and entertainment, they effectively function as censorship.

Myth 1: Is age verification easy and seamless?

Proponents of age verification laws claim that online age verification is an easy, seamless process.

The most common method of age verification requires the visitor to a site with “material harmful to minors” to upload their government ID, such as a passport or driver’s license, through a third-party system to confirm they are who they claim to be and are over the age of 18. While this approach is the most likely to provide true and accessible age verification, it is also the most likely to lead to data breaches, intrusion on privacy rights, and a burden on accessing constitutionally protected speech.²

All other debates about the security risks and privacy concerns of age verification aside, the actual age verification process can be difficult and time-consuming. Following the passage of Utah’s age verification law, one journalist attempted to comply and found that some age verification processes took over 50 steps to establish identity. They also encountered invasive and potentially dangerous protocols, including platforms that required the user to share access to their camera, submit a facial scan, or even identify their individual kinks and what type of pornographic content they like to view before being approved to continue.³

Others have faced different challenges. Following the enactment of Louisiana’s age verification law, Act 440, military veteran Elizabeth Henson found that she couldn’t access certain sites in Louisiana because she didn’t have a Louisiana driver’s license — she was only there as a temporary resident, as her partner had been transferred there for the Coast Guard. Because the state’s verification required a Louisiana ID, she was barred from access.⁴

The age verification process also involves risks not present when showing an ID to a clerk or bouncer. Concerns about security, phishing, exposure, and hacking are enough to dissuade large numbers of visitors from accessing those sites. One platform, JustFor.Fans, said that fewer than 5% of visitors have been willing to comply with the age verification process, an experience echoed by other platforms that have attempted to comply.⁵ In research at France’s Ecole Polytechnique, Professor Olivier Blazy found that just 1.7% of

² Yar, 2019

³ Cole, 2023

⁴ Schwedel, 2023

⁵ Poleo, 2023

consumers were willing to proceed with age verification on adult sites, even with the promise of free content.⁶

When these laws go into effect, many people — those without a government ID, those without a decent webcam or scanning device, and those who may be closeted or fearful of exposure — are locked out of large portions of the internet and denied their First Amendment right to access speech. These restrictions, unfortunately, fall most heavily on already marginalized populations.

Myth 2: Is the age verification process secure?

Legislators and advocates for age verification claim that the verification process is secure, pointing to language in the laws that regulates how much data can be collected and how long it can be retained and outlines stringent security requirements. Unfortunately, research suggests that these protections fail to achieve their stated goals.

Research shows that current age verification systems fail to accurately identify consumers' ages without compromising their privacy or security. To ensure accuracy, age verification requires proof of identification through documents, facial recognition, or both. However, there is currently no technology that ensures total privacy and security of this data.^{7 8 9}

Third-party age verification providers are often utilized in an attempt to offset this risk and to prevent sites that require verification websites from saving or sharing users' information. This means individuals need to upload their identification documents and risk the associated privacy breaches.¹⁰ However, third-party providers are not automatically more secure. Some promise that the data is immediately deleted from their system, while others retain the individual's data but commit to keeping it safe.¹¹ Neither promise, however, ensures immunity from data breaches or hackers.

More so, age verification processes that link one's identity with a record of their sexual preferences obtained via their browsing history risk nefarious actors blackmailing or extorting users who want to protect their anonymity.

⁶ Stanford Cyber Policy Law Center, 2024

⁷ Weissman, 2023

⁸ Lively, 2021

⁹ Roth, 2023

¹⁰ Kelley, 2023

¹¹ Yar, 2019

Unfortunately, there have been several cases in which data breaches led to users' personal information being leaked despite commitments to keep consumer data safe. For example, Louisiana has relied on a third-party age verification app to compare a user's ID to their profile in the Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles (OMV). Months after the law went into effect, the OMV suffered a major data breach (though, luckily, no visit information was revealed).¹²In 2015, when "affair" site Ashley Madison was hacked, millions of users were exposed, and thousands were estimated to have been extorted. At least two committed suicide — despite the site website having reported using proper encryption techniques to protect customers.¹³

Experts fear that such breaches may become more common with the rise of age verification. Some cases of data breaches have resulted in consumers being blackmailed over the type of pornographic content they consume. In 2020, the FBI ranked exposure threats related to porn as one of the top three internet scams. One 18 year old hacker in England made over \$850,000 by blackmailing porn users to pay or have their sexual interests exposed.¹⁴

International governments have raised concerns about the security of age verification systems.

- A national law in the UK aimed to implement similar age verification has been found to be largely ineffective at guaranteeing citizens' privacy and faced similar issues related to data breaches and overall effectiveness.¹⁵
- France's data protection agency, the Commission Nationale de l'Informatique et des Libertés, said it was unable to identify a third-party service that accurately verifies age while respecting the privacy and security of users.¹⁶
- A review of the age and identification verification system in the EU likewise found that third-party verifiers largely fail to offer security and respect users' privacy, noting that far more development and research in the field is needed to adequately protect children from viewing pornography without infringing on users' security.¹⁷
- In Australia, an eSafety commission tasked with implementing an age verification law found such extensive issues with privacy and security with current age verification technology that the plan was scrapped. Instead, the country's eSafety

¹² Finn, 2023

¹³ Matthews, 2016

¹⁴ Dearden, 2019

¹⁵ Yar, 2019

¹⁶ Weissman, 2023

¹⁷ Crepax et al, 2022

commissioner said it would work with the tech industry to develop code that educates parents on filtering software and limit children's access to age-inappropriate content.¹⁸

Policy Suggestion:

- Increase awareness and access to and development of device-level age restrictions. Device-based filters are a more effective solution that doesn't compromise the privacy of consenting adults. Parental controls are much harder to bypass and can not be evaded with a VPN.¹⁹
- Educate lawmakers regarding the risks and burdens of mandatory age verification and the significant constitutional concerns.

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Michigan Anti-Trafficking Project
P.O Box 180032
Utica, MI 48318

Members of the Energy and Commerce Committee,

My name is Leyna Lutrull. I am a human trafficking survivor and educator who currently serves on the Michigan Anti-trafficking Project (MAP) Board which works statewide to prevent human trafficking, educate communities, and support survivors of exploitation. For over eight years I have used my lived experience as a survivor to become a victim advocate, and through this work I was introduced to the newest face of trafficking and sexual crimes against children: sextortion and online grooming. Working closely alongside both victims and family survivors, I documented the increase of child suicides and extortion on these platforms. I learned that one reality is unmistakable: recruitment and grooming of minors increasingly begins online. For this reason, I seek your support of the App Store Accountability Act (H.R. 3149 / S. 1586).

Support for survivors and prosecution remains essential, but prevention at the point of access is critical. By the time families or law enforcement discover exploitation, significant trauma has already occurred. As a victim advocate, I have worked alongside families who have lost children as young as 12 to online predators, many resulting in child suicides as the violence of extortion continues to grow. The chase to understand and educate the public lead me to families of children like Jordan Demay, the Marquette teen who at 16 years old lost his life to sextortion. Though he paid the demands, his predators demanded one more payment, his life. This work lead me to Elijah Heacock, another 16 years old child who was sent over 150 messages and AI generated pornographic images of him created by a predator were used to demand he take his life when he could not meet the financial obligations of his perpetrator. Elijah was gone within 20 minutes from the point of contact, a child who feared his predator would hurt his family if he did not sacrifice himself. This work lead me to Kumiko, a 12 year old girl who played Roblox only to be groomed and sadistically tortured for the next 2 and a half years, in public view on a platform that boast monitoring measures that were seemingly lost as over 7,000 people watched her live streamed abuse. To this day, only three of her assailants have been apprehended and held accountable, three out of 15 members who abused her as part of the online extremism group the 764. Each of these families share one thing: they followed the suggested guidelines, check ins, open conversations and needed dialouge we preach to parents to keep their children safe. Yet each family shares a similar outcome: a child lost to this growing violence. This bill encourages prevention, so those of us in the field can help assist and empower parents to combat these growing statistics.

The App Store Accountability Act addresses this vulnerability by requiring app stores to verify a user's age, obtain parental consent before minors download apps or make in-app purchases, and apply standardized age ratings. These measures create a meaningful checkpoint that strengthens parental oversight and reduces unsupervised access to tools commonly used in grooming and recruitment.

Trafficking no longer requires physical proximity. Today, it often starts with a direct message, a gaming app chat, or a social media connection. Teens are now spending nearly five hours per day online, using 40 different apps each week. This exposure has created unprecedented access for individuals seeking to exploit children, while parents are left with limited tools to prevent it.



The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children reported a 300 percent increase in grooming and extortion cases between 2021 and 2023. In 2024 alone, the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force supported approximately 203,000 investigations, resulting in more than 12,600 arrests nationwide. Partnering these numbers with the over 7,000 reported cases to the National Center for Missing & Exploited children's hotline, we see a rapidly growing crime that needs swift action and preventative measures that this bill provides.

Human trafficking is adaptive. As technology evolves, recruitment tactics evolve with it. The App Store Accountability Act is a practical, preventive step to reduce opportunities for exploitation before a child becomes a victim. As a survivor of human trafficking, I see a growing correlation between the two: grooming and exploitation of minors. I see the patterns rebranded and packaged as far from our door steps, online in a world we can not access. However, the survivor in me would argue that it is anything but: respectfully, it is already here and there is more access than ever for those who wait in the shadows to make their move. This bill places a door where there should have been one, an effort to keep out the ravenous beast that is targeting children online.

Therefore, we respectfully seek your support to urge Congress to advance this legislation to protect children and combat trafficking in Michigan and across the nation.

Thank you for your consideration and your time.

Leyna Luttrull
Human Trafficking Survivor Educator
Board Member Michigan Anti Trafficking Project
Human Trafficking in Schools Educational Task Force
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February 26, 2026

Dear House Energy & Commerce Committee,

As app leaders, we commend lawmakers for their dedication to protecting children online. However, the proposed App Store Accountability Act’s (ASAA’s) broad mandate would restrict minors’ access to safe, age-appropriate, and potentially life-saving apps.

ASAA requires minors to receive parental consent to download every app—even if the app is kid-oriented or provides crucial information, like an educational resource or access to emergency services. This broad mandate creates serious hurdles for kids trying to access beneficial apps, as they must wait for their guardian to approve the download. If every app download requires approval, guardians will fall behind or simply ignore the notifications.

For small app developers, this broad mandate means fewer users accessing their apps, and therefore more barriers to growth and success.

We urge the Committee to support the approach in H.R. 6333, the Parents Over Platforms Act (POPA), which prioritizes safety where risk actually exists. Should the Committee choose to proceed with ASAA, we request that lawmakers **exempt the following app categories** from ASAA to mitigate unintended consequences and ensure kids and teens can access critical resources:

- **Emergency services** such as weather forecasts, natural disaster warnings (i.e, for earthquakes and tornadoes), disaster relief support, emergency health services (i.e, distress signals), etc.
- **Personal safety**, such as safety/SOS buttons, location sharing, etc.
- **Educational resources**, such as online standardized testing and test preparation
- **Mental and behavioral health services**
- **Faith-based resources**
- **Utility apps** such as calculators, timers, remotes, etc.

We urge you to consider our exemption request and help maintain children’s access to safe, appropriate, and beneficial resources.

Sincerely,

Dara Cook
CEO
[Expect Fitness](#)
New York, NY



Sean Higgins
CEO
[BetterYou](#)
Saint Paul, MN



Adri Ofman
COO/Co-Founder
[FlipaClip](#)
Miami, FL



Dennis Kemboi
Founder/CEO
[Qityol LLC](#)
Lakewood, WA



Cary Wheelous
CEO
[Hayti](#)
Durham, NC



Joshua McFarland
Owner
[Jernung, LLC](#)
Mainville, OH



Mariah Smith
CTO
[Brae Systems](#)
Chicago, IL



Seth Miller
CEO
[Rapchat](#)
Columbus, OH



Doug Hexter
CEO
[WoofTrax, Inc.](#)
Easthampton, MA



Richard Perry
Owner/CEO
[Starflower Solutions LLC](#)
Olathe, KS



Jason Stock
Founder
[Firecracker Software LLC](#)
Spokane, WA



Maria Ly Vanrenen
Co-Founder
[Skimble, Inc.](#)
Salt Lake City, UT



Arijit Sengupta
Founder
[SmartRF Solutions](#)
Miami, FL





March 4, 2026

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis
Chairman
The Honorable Jan Schakowsky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, Trade
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 6292 – the “Don’t Sell Kids’ Data Act”

Dear Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Bilirakis, and Ranking Member Schakowsky:

On behalf of the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), the Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies (ASCIA), and the National Sheriffs’ Association (NSA), we would like to express our sincere appreciation for your leadership and for the Committee’s decision to provide additional time for the evaluation of H.R. 6292, the “Don’t Sell Kids’ Data Act.”

We are grateful for the opportunity to further discuss the technical challenges this legislation poses for law enforcement. While we share your deep commitment to strengthening minors' data privacy, we want to ensure any final language protects children without inadvertently shielding offenders or creating barriers to the recovery of victims. We look forward to working with you and your teams to refine provisions to ensure that critical evidence in child exploitation and trafficking cases remains available to investigators.

We believe the best way to protect our communities is for lawmakers and law enforcement to work closely together on these types of critical issues. We appreciate your willingness to hear our perspective, and we are committed to staying engaged with the Committee to ensure legislation protects children's privacy while preserving the tools we need to keep them safe.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and for your continued partnership in our shared mission to keep children safe.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Bob Gualtieri
President, MCSA

Trent Teyema
Executive Director, ASCIA

Sheriff Chris West
President, NSA

March 3, 2026

Re: Support for H.R. 1623 – SCREEN Act (Rep. Mary Miller)

Dear Chairman and Members of the U.S. Energy and Commerce Committee,

We write to express strong support for H.R. 1623, the SCREEN Act, introduced by Representative Mary Miller. This legislation addresses one of the most persistent and harmful gaps in federal law: the unrestricted online distribution of pornography to minors.

For nearly three decades, Congress has not meaningfully updated federal safeguards despite the dramatic expansion of internet access. In *Free Speech Coalition, Inc. v. Paxton*, the Supreme Court recognized the changed technological landscape, noting that with the rise of smartphones and streaming platforms, minors can now access vast libraries of sexually explicit material “at almost any time and place,” with an ease unimaginable at the time of *Reno* and *Ashcroft II*.

The Court made clear that age verification is constitutionally permissible and often necessary to protect minors. It explained that “[r]equiring proof of age is an ordinary and appropriate means of enforcing an age-based limit on obscenity to minors” and is necessary for an effective prohibition on minors accessing age-inappropriate sexual content online.

In light of this ruling, Congress faces no constitutional barrier to requiring reasonable, user-level age verification to protect children from pornography. The SCREEN Act represents a measured, constitutionally grounded response to a long-standing and escalating problem.

We respectfully urge the Committee to advance this legislation and restore meaningful protections for children in the digital age.

Sincerely,

Ricky Darr
Executive Director

ricky@decencyusa.org





ALLIANCE *for* CONSUMERS

**CONSUMER
PROTECTION REPORT**

Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline Update: The Shady Eight 2025 Update

A continuing look into how trial lawyers use public contracts with state and local governments to boost left-wing political efforts while diverting money away from consumers

One of the biggest consumer protection problems we face is the growing trend of trial lawyers and public officials diverting money from victims and everyday consumers.

A stark example of this problem is the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline—politicians handing out lucrative public contracts to trial lawyers who give millions of dollars to liberal political campaigns. This is often done under the guise of consumer protection. But, while the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline helps politicians funnel public money toward left-wing politics, it leaves everyday consumers and taxpayers with a horrible deal.

Alliance For Consumers launched a series of Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline Updates in 2022, starting with a look at federal political giving from 2017-2020 by eight law firms—referred to as the Shady Eight—that serve as Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline posterchildren.

THE SHADY EIGHT

**Morgan & Morgan
Lieff Cabraser
Motley Rice
Baron & Budd
Grant & Eisenhofer
Berger Montague
Cohen Milstein
Simmons Hanly**

These eight law firms are archetypal participants in the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline. Each has been ranked by the National Law Journal or Legal500 as a leader amongst plaintiff-side trial firms. And each is powered in part by public contracts on prominent litigation. Simmons Hanly has represented local governments in major opioid litigation, Motley Rice has won the Elite Trial Lawyers Award for government representation from American Lawyer Magazine, and Morgan & Morgan, Lieff Cabraser, Baron & Budd, Grant & Eisenhofer, Berger Montague, and Cohen

Milstein have benefited from state contracts in places like Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico, and New Jersey.

Alliance For Consumers has provided an annual Shady Eight Update since 2022. This Alliance For Consumers Consumer Protection Report on the Shady Eight analyzes the federal political activity by the so-called Shady Eight during 2024.

~\$25 MILLION
in combined
political donations

These “Shady Eight” firms generated nearly \$25 million in combined political donations from 2017-2024 to committees and candidates in the Federal Election Commission (FEC) tracking system. That is the total given by the firms directly, their 1,750 or so combined lawyers, and other employees and staff. Of that, over \$4 million was generated by the firms during 2024 alone.

99% **to Democrats**
& Their Allies

The partisan slant to this money remains unrelenting. The Shady Eight sent 99% of their combined federal donations during 2024 to Democratic campaigns and allied political committees, continuing the 99% commitment to Democrats and their allies from the previous Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline Updates covering 2017-2023.

Only two members of the Shady Eight gave less than 99% of their total federal donations to Democrats and their allies over the course of 2024—Morgan & Morgan at 97%, and Berger Montague at 94%.

On the other hand, five firms showed a 100% commitment to Democrats and their allies—Lieff Cabraser, Motley Rice, Grant & Eisenhofer, Simmons Hanly, and Baron & Budd. Combined, these firms generated more than \$2.5 million in federal donations in 2024.

Members Of The Shady Eight Recorded Not A Single Dollar To Republicans Candidates or Allied Committees

As for the specifics of where the money went, that too, reveals quite a bit about the Shady Eight's partisan agenda.

More than 50% of the combined money generated in 2024 by the Shady Eight went to the political committees that form the professionalized superstructure of the Democratic Party—party committees at the state and federal level, leadership committees, and other similar organizations.

The Democratic National Committee (DNC) was the single biggest recipient of the Shady Eight's support during 2024, with Vice President Harris's committees a close second. Altogether, the Shady

Eight generated almost \$1.4 million in combined donations in 2024 for the Harris campaign and the DNC.

Midterm Senate races were also a priority for the Shady Eight. Besides the support going to Vice President Harris, the top candidates receiving monetary support from the Shady Eight were all Democratic Senate candidates: Ruben Gallego (D – AZ), Sherrod Brown (D – OH), Bob Casey (D – PA), and Jon Tester (D – MT).

TOP RECIPIENTS OF THE SHADY EIGHT POLITICAL DONATIONS

Kamala Harris (D)

Ruben Gallego (D, AZ)

Sherrod Brown (D, OH)

Bob Casey (D, PA)

Jon Tester (D, MT)

SHADY EIGHT FIRM-BY-FIRM PARTISANSHIP

LIEFF CABRASER – 100% of the FEC-recorded donations from the firm and its employees went to Democrats and their allies in 2024. The firm sent more than 70% of the over \$1 million in donations it generated in 2024 toward the political committees that form the professionalized superstructure of the Democratic Party, including over \$100,000 to the DNC, nearly \$100,000 to the DSCC, over \$75,000 to the DCCC, and smaller amounts to a litany of other groups, like state party committees and groups like Emily's List.

Since the beginning of 2017, over the full set of Shady Eight Reports, the firm's total federal donations have been over \$5.5 million, with 99% of that flowing to Democratic candidates and allied committees.

MORGAN & MORGAN – 97% of the FEC-recorded donations by the firm and its employees went to Democrats and their allies

in 2024. The firm generated almost \$700,000 in FEC donations in 2024, with over half of that money going to support organizations that form the professionalized superstructure of the Democratic Party that supports liberal candidates for state and federal office, including over \$300,000 to the DNC. The firm also generated over \$250,000 for Vice President Harris's campaign efforts.

Since the beginning of 2017, over the full set of Shady Eight Reports, the firm's total federal donations have been over \$5 million, with 99% of that flowing to Democratic candidates and allied committees, including over \$2 million flowing to support President Biden and Vice President Harris.

MOTLEY RICE – 100% of the FEC-recorded donations from the firm and its employees went to Democrats and their allies in 2024. The firm generated more than \$750,000 in FEC donations in 2024, with almost 50% of that money going to

support Democratic Senators, including more than \$50,000 each to Senators Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, Jon Tester of Montana, and Jacky Rosen of Nevada.

Since the beginning of 2017, over the full set of Shady Eight Reports, the firm's total federal donations have been nearly \$3.5 million, with 99% of that flowing to Democratic candidates and allied committees.

BARON & BUDD – 100% of the FEC-recorded donations from the firm and its employees went to Democrats and their allies in 2024. The firm generated more than \$400,000 in FEC donations in 2024, with more than 75% of that money going to organizations that form the professionalized superstructure of the Democratic Party that supports liberal candidates for state and federal office, including sending over \$100,000 to the DNC.

Since the beginning of 2017, over the full set of Shady Eight Reports, the firm's total federal donations have been over \$2 million, with 100% of that flowing to Democratic candidates and allied committees.

COHEN MILSTEIN – 99% of the FEC-recorded donations from the firm and its employees went to Democrats and their allies in 2024. The firm generated more than \$400,000 in FEC donations in 2024, with a mere \$4,500 going to Republican candidates and groups. The two largest recipients of the money generated by the firm in 2024 were the DNC and Vice President Harris, each of whom netted more than \$100,000.

Since the beginning of 2017, over the full set of Shady Eight Reports, the firm's total federal donations have been just shy of \$1.5 million, with 99% of that flowing to Democratic candidates and allied committees.

GRANT & EISENHOFER – 100% of the FEC-recorded donations from the firm and its employees went to Democrats and their allies in

2024. The firm generated more than \$250,000 in FEC donations in 2024, with no money going to Republican candidates and groups. Of the more than \$250,000 that the firm generated in 2024 for Democratic candidates and groups, over \$200,000 went to organizations that form the professionalized superstructure of the Democratic Party, including more than \$75,000 to the DNC and \$20,000 each going to the DSCC and DCCC.

Since the beginning of 2017, over the full set of Shady Eight Reports, the firm's total federal donations have been almost \$1.75 million, with 99% of that flowing to Democratic candidates and allied committees.

BERGER MONTAGUE – 94% of the FEC-recorded donations from the firm and its employees went to Democrats and their allies in 2024. The firm generated almost \$350,000 in FEC donations in 2024, with almost all going to organizations that form the professionalized superstructure of the Democratic Party, including the DNC, DCCC, and similar groups. The largest recipient of the money generated by the firm in 2024 was a group led by Jim Messina called Democracy Defenders PAC.

Since the beginning of 2017, over the full set of Shady Eight Reports, the firm's total federal donations have been over \$2.25 million, with 97% of that flowing to Democratic candidates and allied committees.

SIMMONS HANLY – 100% of the FEC-recorded donations from the firm and its employees went to Democrats and their allies in 2024. The firm generated more than \$125,000 in FEC donations in 2024, with virtually of that money going to support Democratic candidates for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House.

Since the beginning of 2017, over the full set of Shady Eight Reports, the firm's total federal donations have been over \$2.5 million, with 99% of that flowing to Democratic candidates and allied committees.

This partisan political giving is supported by money from public contracts signed by politicians and public officials; money that belongs to the taxpayers and consumers.

SHADY EIGHT % DONATIONS TO DEMOCRATS AND ALLIED COMMITTEES

MORGAN & MORGAN	LIEFF CABRASER	MOTLEY RICE	BARON & BUDD
97%	100%	100%	100%
GRANT & EISENHOFER	BERGER MONTAGUE	COHEN MILSTEIN	SIMMONS HANLEY
100%	94%	99%	100%

THREAT TO CONSUMERS AND TAXPAYERS

This partisan political giving is supported by money from lucrative public contracts signed by politicians and public officials, money that really belongs in the pockets of taxpayers and consumers.

Consumers and taxpayers lose out from the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline in many ways, but one particularly dire aspect is how the public contracts that are the gateway to the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline are so often missing basic protections (including basic ethics protections) that should be in all outside-counsel contracts. The contracts can be only a few pages long, sometimes look like they were written by the trial lawyers themselves, and have glaring weaknesses, such as:

- The contracts often have no expiration date or clear language tying the engagement to a particular defendant or case;
- The contracts rarely include appropriate conflicts protection, even though trial lawyers often represent multiple governments that may have very different interests in the same case;

The Shady Eight are stark examples — although far from the only ones — of how the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline works

- The contracts usually fail to require that the trial lawyers provide the best pricing terms that lawyers are offering to any other governmental client on the same matter; and
- The contracts almost never ensure that contingency fees for the trial lawyers will not be taken out of money set aside for restitution to victims.

These types of weak, under-protective, giveaway contracts make some sense if the goal is to fund left-wing campaigns—as the political activities of the Shady Eight demonstrate—but they make no sense if your goal is to help consumers and protect taxpayers.

These types of contracts make some sense if the goal is to fund left-wing campaigns—as the political activities of the Shady Eight demonstrate—but they make no sense if your goal is to help consumers and protect taxpayers.

Alliance For Consumers is focused on putting more money in the pockets of everyday consumers and ensuring that consumers and the rule of law are not left behind by trial lawyers and public officials. Raising concern about the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline is central to the mission of Alliance For Consumers because the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline undercuts this mission.

The “Shady Eight” are stark examples—although far from the only ones—of how the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline works, with politicians feeding

sweetheart contracts to trial lawyers who give 99% of their political donations to liberals and will happily turn around and pump millions of dollars into left-leaning candidates, committees, and allied organizations.

Good governance and honest stewardship call for better. The consumer should never be on the losing side of a left-wing political money game like what is on display in the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline.

FIRM	TOTAL DEM	SENATE (D)	HOUSE (D)	DEM ORGS	DEM PRIMARY	BIDEN/HARRIS	% DEM	GOP	OTHER	OVERALL TOTAL
Baron & Budd	\$2,192,052.24	\$437,415.91	\$131,614.98	\$1,257,268.84	\$16,374.27	\$349,378.24	100%	\$4,996.10	\$1,100.00	\$2,198,148.34
Berger Montague	\$2,203,320.31	\$375,636.93	\$277,247.50	\$1,168,545.79	\$23,020.00	\$358,870.09	97%	\$37,285.69	\$26,472.00	\$2,267,078.00
Cohen Milstein	\$1,476,364.40	\$474,678.12	\$166,477.51	\$503,665.41	\$11,650.70	\$319,892.66	99%	\$8,460.00	\$8,176.93	\$1,493,001.33
Grant Eisenhofer	\$1,735,843.60	\$252,171.66	\$102,975.00	\$1,103,350.57	\$6,355.81	\$270,990.56	99%	\$12,600.00	\$250.00	\$1,748,001.33
Lieff Cabraser	\$5,633,844.46	\$1,628,603.71	\$429,268.87	\$2,886,271.82	\$71,332.42	\$618,367.64	99%	\$182.05	\$34,825.00	\$5,668,851.51
Morgan & Morgan	\$5,278,139.37	\$297,344.77	\$210,578.51	\$2,558,792.02	\$78,135.33	\$2,133,288.74	99%	\$54,301.58	\$6,894.24	\$5,339,335.19
Motley Rice	\$3,380,869.37	\$1,690,164.87	\$714,013.43	\$704,543.86	\$13,675.50	\$258,462.71	99%	\$49,798.44	\$1,000.00	\$3,431,658.81
Simmons Hanly	\$2,563,812.25	\$1,273,462.09	\$437,933.17	\$406,724.42	\$13,545.84	\$432,146.73	99%	\$30,859.10	\$381.78	\$2,595,053.13
TOTAL	\$24,464,237.00	\$6,429,278.06	\$2,470,108.97	\$10,589,162.73	\$234,089.87	\$4,741,397.37	99%	\$198,482.96	\$79,099.95	\$24,741,819.91

“SHADY 8” DONATIONS 2024

FIRM	TOTAL DEM	SENATE (D)	HOUSE (D)	DEM ORGS	BIDEN/HARRIS	% DEM	GOP	OVERALL TOTAL
Baron & Budd	\$408,842.29	\$48,810.83	\$24,100.00	\$313,338.84	\$22,592.62	100%	\$151.00	\$408,993.39
Berger Montague	\$329,629.09	\$23,235.00	\$22,005.00	\$269,789.00	\$14,600.09	94%	\$20,150.00	\$349,779.09
Cohen Milstein	\$401,755.57	\$101,350.24	\$43,412.50	\$149,851.76	\$107,141.07	99%	\$4,500.00	\$406,255.57
Grant Eisenhofer	\$267,047.19	\$1,350.00	\$16,455.00	\$219,067.27	\$30,174.92	100%	\$0.00	\$267,047.19
Lieff Cabraser	\$1,184,630.61	\$163,478.59	\$110,254.27	\$867,136.51	\$43,761.24	100%	\$152.05	\$1,184,782.66
Morgan & Morgan	\$673,746.59	\$7,162.50	\$27,501.00	\$354,394.49	\$284,688.60	97%	\$19,685.42	\$693,432.01
Motley Rice	\$770,645.20	\$325,950.00	\$165,600.00	\$150,090.42	\$129,004.78	100%	\$2,884.18	\$773,529.38
Simmons Hanly	\$132,993.78	\$61,433.34	\$57,858.32	\$8,145.12	\$5,557.00	100%	\$159.10	\$133,152.88
TOTAL	\$4,169,290.32	\$732,770.50	\$467,186.09	\$2,331,813.41	\$637,520.32	98.87%	\$47,681.85	\$4,216,972.17



ALLIANCE *for* CONSUMERS

**CONSUMER
PROTECTION REPORT**

P o s t J o b s	U p l o a d Y o u r R e s u m e	S u b s c r i b e f o r \$ 1 .2 5 / w e e k	L O G I N
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Thursday, March 05, 2026
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Lawyers Make More Campaign Contributions than Any Other Profession: An Analysis

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Most law firms avoid posting jobs on Indeed or LinkedIn due to high costs. Instead, they publish them on their own websites, bar association pages, and niche legal boards. LawCrossing finds these hidden jobs, giving you access to exclusive opportunities. [Sign up now!](#)

Published March 19, 2023

Donna Huffaker

Summary

The legal profession has long been a major force in political campaigns, with lawyers and law firms making some of the biggest contributions to candidates and political causes. According to a recent analysis by OpenSecrets.org, lawyers and law firms have been the most consistent industry donors to congressional and presidential campaigns in the past 20 years, outspending all other industries.

From 1998 to 2018, lawyers and law firms donated over \$620 million to federal candidates and political committees, with the majority of funds going to the Democratic party. This marks a significant increase from the 1990s and 2000s, when the legal profession contributed much less to political campaigns.

The analysis found that in 2018 alone, the legal profession donated more than \$142 million to federal candidates and parties, making it the largest source of industry contributions. This is followed by the real estate industry, which contributed nearly \$134 million that same year.

The OpenSecrets.org analysis found that the legal profession tends to give more money to individual candidates than other industries. In 2018, lawyers and law firms gave \$91 million to candidates, compared to \$51 million to political parties and other political organizations.

Lawyers and law firms also tend to favor Democratic candidates when making political contributions. Of the \$620 million in contributions made by the legal profession since 1998, 69% went to Democratic candidates and causes. In contrast, the real estate industry gave 62.5% of its contributions to the Republican party.

Members Of The Shady Eight Recorded Not A Single Dollar To Republicans Candidates or Allied Committees

As for the specifics of where the money went, that too, reveals quite a bit about the Shady Eight's partisan agenda.

More than 50% of the combined money generated in 2024 by the Shady Eight went to the political committees that form the professionalized superstructure of the Democratic Party—party committees at the state and federal level, leadership committees, and other similar organizations.

The Democratic National Committee (DNC) was the single biggest recipient of the Shady Eight's support during 2024, with Vice President Harris's committees a close second. Altogether, the Shady

Eight generated almost \$1.4 million in combined donations in 2024 for the Harris campaign and the DNC.

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TOP RECIPIENTS OF THE SHADY EIGHT POLITICAL DONATIONS

Kamala Harris (D)
Ruben Gallego (D, AZ)
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SHADY EIGHT FIRM-BY-FIRM PARTISANSHIP

LIEFF CABRASER – 100% of the FEC-recorded donations from the firm and its employees went to Democrats and their allies in 2024. The firm sent more than 70% of the over \$1 million in donations it generated in 2024 toward the political committees that form the professionalized superstructure of the Democratic Party, including over \$100,000 to the DNC, nearly \$100,000 to the DSCC, over \$75,000 to the DCCC, and smaller amounts to a litany of other groups, like state party committees and groups like Emily's List.

Since the beginning of 2017, over the full set of Shady Eight Reports, the firm's total federal donations have been over \$5.5 million, with 99% of that flowing to Democratic candidates and allied committees.

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Since the beginning of 2017, over the full set of Shady Eight Reports, the firm's total federal donations have been over \$2.25 million, with 97% of that flowing to Democratic candidates and allied committees.

SIMMONS HANLY – 100% of the FEC-recorded donations from the firm and its employees went to Democrats and their allies in 2024. The firm generated more than \$125,000 in FEC donations in 2024, with virtually of that money going to support Democratic candidates for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House.

Since the beginning of 2017, over the full set of Shady Eight Reports, the firm's total federal donations have been over \$2.5 million, with 99% of that flowing to Democratic candidates and allied committees.

This partisan political giving is supported by money from public contracts signed by politicians and public officials; money that belongs to the taxpayers and consumers.

SHADY EIGHT % DONATIONS TO DEMOCRATS AND ALLIED COMMITTEES

MORGAN & MORGAN	LIEFF CABRASER	MOTLEY RICE	BARON & BUDD
97%	100%	100%	100%
GRANT & EISENHOFER	BERGER MONTAGUE	COHEN MILSTEIN	SIMMONS HANLEY
100%	94%	99%	100%

THREAT TO CONSUMERS AND TAXPAYERS

This partisan political giving is supported by money from lucrative public contracts signed by politicians and public officials, money that really belongs in the pockets of taxpayers and consumers.

Consumers and taxpayers lose out from the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline in many ways, but one particularly dire aspect is how the public contracts that are the gateway to the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline are so often missing basic protections (including basic ethics protections) that should be in all outside-counsel contracts. The contracts can be only a few pages long, sometimes look like they were written by the trial lawyers themselves, and have glaring weaknesses, such as:

- The contracts often have no expiration date or clear language tying the engagement to a particular defendant or case;
- The contracts rarely include appropriate conflicts protection, even though trial lawyers often represent multiple governments that may have very different interests in the same case;

The Shady Eight are stark examples—although far from the only ones—of how the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline works

- The contracts usually fail to require that the trial lawyers provide the best pricing terms that lawyers are offering to any other governmental client on the same matter; and
- The contracts almost never ensure that contingency fees for the trial lawyers will not be taken out of money set aside for restitution to victims.

These types of weak, under-protective, giveaway contracts make some sense if the goal is to fund left-wing campaigns—as the political activities of the Shady Eight demonstrate—but they make no sense if your goal is to help consumers and protect taxpayers.

These types of contracts make some sense if the goal is to fund left-wing campaigns—as the political activities of the Shady Eight demonstrate—but they make no sense if your goal is to help consumers and protect taxpayers.

Alliance For Consumers is focused on putting more money in the pockets of everyday consumers and ensuring that consumers and the rule of law are not left behind by trial lawyers and public officials. Raising concern about the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline is central to the mission of Alliance For Consumers because the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline undercuts this mission.

The “Shady Eight” are stark examples—although far from the only ones—of how the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline works, with politicians feeding

sweetheart contracts to trial lawyers who give 99% of their political donations to liberals and will happily turn around and pump millions of dollars into left-leaning candidates, committees, and allied organizations.

Good governance and honest stewardship call for better. The consumer should never be on the losing side of a left-wing political money game like what is on display in the Shady Trial Lawyer Pipeline.

FIRM	TOTAL DEM	SENATE (D)	HOUSE (D)	DEM ORGS	DEM PRIMARY	BIDEN/HARRIS	% DEM	GOP	OTHER	OVERALL TOTAL
Baron & Budd	\$2,192,052.24	\$437,415.91	\$131,614.98	\$1,257,268.84	\$16,374.27	\$349,378.24	100%	\$4,996.10	\$1,100.00	\$2,198,148.34
Berger Montague	\$2,203,320.31	\$375,636.93	\$277,247.50	\$1,168,545.79	\$23,020.00	\$358,870.09	97%	\$37,285.69	\$26,472.00	\$2,267,078.00
Cohen Milstein	\$1,476,364.40	\$474,678.12	\$166,477.51	\$503,665.41	\$11,650.70	\$319,892.66	99%	\$8,460.00	\$8,176.93	\$1,493,001.33
Grant Eisenhofer	\$1,735,843.60	\$252,171.66	\$102,975.00	\$1,103,350.57	\$6,355.81	\$270,990.56	99%	\$12,600.00	\$250.00	\$1,748,001.33
Lieff Cabraser	\$5,633,844.46	\$1,628,603.71	\$429,268.87	\$2,886,271.82	\$71,332.42	\$618,367.64	99%	\$182.05	\$34,825.00	\$5,668,851.51
Morgan & Morgan	\$5,278,139.37	\$297,344.77	\$210,578.51	\$2,558,792.02	\$78,135.33	\$2,133,288.74	99%	\$54,301.58	\$6,894.24	\$5,339,335.19
Motley Rice	\$3,380,869.37	\$1,690,164.87	\$714,013.43	\$704,543.86	\$13,675.50	\$258,462.71	99%	\$49,798.44	\$1,000.00	\$3,431,658.81
Simmons Hanly	\$2,563,812.25	\$1,273,462.09	\$437,933.17	\$406,724.42	\$13,545.84	\$432,146.73	99%	\$30,859.10	\$381.78	\$2,595,053.13
TOTAL	\$24,464,237.00	\$6,429,278.06	\$2,470,108.97	\$10,589,162.73	\$234,089.87	\$4,741,397.37	99%	\$198,482.96	\$79,099.95	\$24,741,819.91

“SHADY 8” DONATIONS 2024

FIRM	TOTAL DEM	SENATE (D)	HOUSE (D)	DEM ORGS	BIDEN/HARRIS	% DEM	GOP	OVERALL TOTAL
Baron & Budd	\$408,842.29	\$48,810.83	\$24,100.00	\$313,338.84	\$22,592.62	100%	\$151.00	\$408,993.39
Berger Montague	\$329,629.09	\$23,235.00	\$22,005.00	\$269,789.00	\$14,600.09	94%	\$20,150.00	\$349,779.09
Cohen Milstein	\$401,755.57	\$101,350.24	\$43,412.50	\$149,851.76	\$107,141.07	99%	\$4,500.00	\$406,255.57
Grant Eisenhofer	\$267,047.19	\$1,350.00	\$16,455.00	\$219,067.27	\$30,174.92	100%	\$0.00	\$267,047.19
Lieff Cabraser	\$1,184,630.61	\$163,478.59	\$110,254.27	\$867,136.51	\$43,761.24	100%	\$152.05	\$1,184,782.66
Morgan & Morgan	\$673,746.59	\$7,162.50	\$27,501.00	\$354,394.49	\$284,688.60	97%	\$19,685.42	\$693,432.01
Motley Rice	\$770,645.20	\$325,950.00	\$165,600.00	\$150,090.42	\$129,004.78	100%	\$2,884.18	\$773,529.38
Simmons Hanly	\$132,993.78	\$61,433.34	\$57,858.32	\$8,145.12	\$5,557.00	100%	\$159.10	\$133,152.88
TOTAL	\$4,169,290.32	\$732,770.50	\$467,186.09	\$2,331,813.41	\$637,520.32	98.87%	\$47,681.85	\$4,216,972.17



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February 10, 2026

Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
511 Dirksen Senate Bldg.
Washington, DC, 20510

Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Marsha Blackburn
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Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
House Committee on Energy
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Honorable Mike Johnson
House Speaker
521 Cannon House Bldg.
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Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
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Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Senate Judiciary Committee
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Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy
and Commerce
2107 Rayburn House Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators and Representatives,

We, the undersigned Attorneys General, as the chief legal officers of our states, write in support of the Senate version of the bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA), S. 1748.

We recognize the serious and growing threats that social media platforms pose to minors. Many social media platforms deliberately target minors, fueling a nationwide youth mental health crisis. These platforms are intentionally designed to be addictive, particularly for underaged users, and generate substantial profits by monetizing minors' personal data through targeted advertising. These companies fail to adequately disclose the addictive nature of their products or the well-documented harms associated with excessive social media use. Increasing evidence demonstrates that these companies are

aware of the adverse mental health consequences imposed on underage users, yet they have chosen to persist in these practices. Accordingly, many of our Offices have initiated investigations and filed lawsuits against Meta and TikTok for their role in harming minors.

Last year, the AG community expressed our strong support of KOSA. We continue to support the Senate version of KOSA, S. 1748, which has broad bipartisan sponsorship and addresses our concerns regarding preemption and Duty of Care. However, we cannot agree with a counterpart KOSA bill, H.R. 6484, which has expansive preemption language included within it.¹ States have pioneered laws that promote online safety for minors. H.R. 6484's preemption language would expressly limit the states' ability to address evolving online harms in the future.

We are also concerned about H.R. 6484's omission of a Duty of Care, which is a key component of the Senate's KOSA bill, S. 1748. In lieu of a Duty of Care, H.R. 6484 merely requires that companies have "reasonable policies, practices, and procedures" that address a limited list of harms. But this language will not deliver meaningful change. Many of these companies already maintain policies about the same limited list of harms—and those self-serving policies have not protected our states' minors from injury.

We urge the House to align with S. 1748, which (1) preserves states' authority to enact laws, rules, or regulations that provide greater protection for minors; (2) includes a Duty of Care requirement; and (3) expands the enumerated harms to include suicide, eating disorders, compulsive use, other mental health harms, and financial harms. These changes will help create a safer online environment for our children.

Sincerely,



William Tong
Connecticut Attorney General



Anne E. Lopez
Hawaii Attorney General



Dave Yost
Ohio Attorney General



Jonathan Skrametti
Tennessee Attorney General

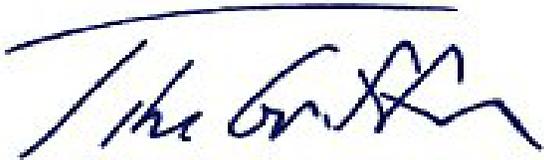
¹ See H.R. 6484, Sec. 10, "Relationship to State Laws."



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Mississippi Attorney General

Catherine L. Hanaway
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Aaron D. Ford
Nevada Attorney General

John M. Formella
New Hampshire Attorney General

Jennifer Davenport (Acting)
New Jersey Attorney General

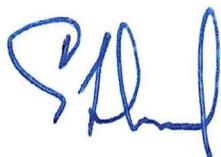
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Letitia James
New York Attorney General



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North Dakota Attorney General



Gentner Drummond
Oklahoma Attorney General



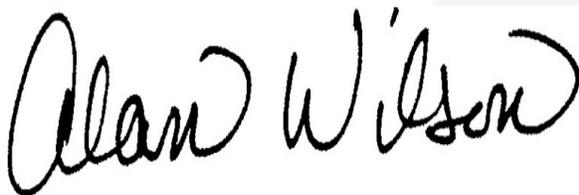
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Derek Brown
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Charity Clark
Vermont Attorney General



Keith Kautz
Wyoming Attorney General

Mark Zuckerberg Takes the Stand in Landmark Social Media Addiction Trial

Meta's chief executive said users spent a lot of time on Instagram because of its value, as he was grilled about child safety issues in front of a jury.



Listen to this article · 7:16 min [Learn more](#)



By Eli Tan

Reporting from the California Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Feb. 18, 2026

Sign up for the On Tech newsletter. Get our best tech reporting from the week. [Get it sent to your inbox.](#)

In a crowded Los Angeles courtroom on Wednesday, a lawyer drew a picture of a frowning stick figure and projected it on a screen in front of Mark Zuckerberg, Meta's chief executive.

The figure represented a vulnerable child. The plaintiff's lawyer asked Mr. Zuckerberg, 41, clad in a navy blue suit and gray tie, whether a reasonable company should help, ignore or prey on the child.

"I think a reasonable company should try to help a person that uses its services," Mr. Zuckerberg said on the stand in California Superior Court of Los Angeles County.

Mr. Zuckerberg, who founded Facebook in his college dorm room in 2004, was testifying in a landmark tech addiction case against Meta and YouTube that is the first in a flood of lawsuits filed by minors, school districts and state attorneys



general claiming that social media platforms, much like cigarettes or slot machines at casinos, are addictive and harmful. The tech companies have denied the claims.

Mr. Zuckerberg's appearance in court — his first time testifying about child safety in front of a jury — was highly anticipated. Meta, which owns Instagram and Facebook and has more than 3.5 billion users, has come under fire as one of the biggest providers of platforms for teenagers. Parents, as well as tech policy and child safety groups have accused the company of hooking young people on its apps and causing mental health issues that have led to anxiety, depression, eating disorders and self-harm.



Lori Schott, left, is comforted outside of the courthouse in Los Angeles. She said her daughter Annalee killed herself in 2020 at the age of 18 after viewing videos that glorified self-harm. Mark Abramson for The New York Times



Ms. Schott walks into the courthouse to hear Mr. Zuckerberg's testimony in the landmark social media case. Mark Abramson for The New York Times

Those concerns have mounted globally. In 2024, the U.S. Surgeon General called for adding warning labels to social media explaining the platforms were associated with mental health harms for adolescents. In December, Australia barred children under 16 from using social media. Malaysia, Spain and Denmark are considering similar rules.

Mr. Zuckerberg has faced particular ire. He has been called before Congress for questioning about child safety on multiple occasions. In one 2024 hearing, he was forced to stand and apologize to parents who said social media contributed to their children's deaths.

Dozens of U.S. state attorneys general have also sued Meta over allegations of child sexual exploitation and other issues. In New Mexico, a trial began this month over a case brought by the state's attorney general, Raúl Torrez, accusing Meta of

allowing predators to reach children and having chatbots that harmed young people.

In internal documents that surfaced in some of the lawsuits, Mr. Zuckerberg and other Meta leaders repeatedly played down their platforms' risks to young people, while rejecting employee pleas to bolster youth guardrails and hire additional staff.

Some of those documents were on display during the opening statements of the bellwether case Mr. Zuckerberg testified at on Wednesday. A 20-year-old Californian, identified as K.G.M., sued YouTube, TikTok, Snap and Meta in 2023, accusing the companies of engineering their apps to create compulsive use. That led to her body dysmorphia, anxiety and depression, she said. K.G.M. settled with Snap and TikTok for undisclosed terms.

K.G.M.'s lawyer, Mark Lanier, said during his opening statement this month that Instagram and YouTube's apps were built like "digital casinos" that profited off addictive behavior. He pointed to internal documents from Meta and Google, which owns YouTube, comparing their technology to gambling, tobacco and drug use. In a 2015 memo, Mr. Zuckerberg encouraged executives to prioritize increasing the time that teenagers spend on Meta's apps.

Meta said in its opening statement that K.G.M.'s mental health issues were caused by familial abuse and turmoil. The company presented medical records to show that social media addiction was not a focus of her therapy sessions.



A man wheels boxes into the courthouse. Internal documents that surfaced in some lawsuits against Meta showed Mr. Zuckerberg and other Meta leaders played down their platforms' risks to young people. Mark Abramson for The New York Times

Adam Mosseri, Instagram's chief executive, testified last week that the app was not "clinically addictive." Still, he added, social media could cause harm if used too much.

YouTube said in its opening statement that it was not a social media company and that its features were not designed to be addictive. Neal Mohan, YouTube's chief executive, was scheduled to testify this week, but the plaintiff's lawyers removed him from the witness list. It was unclear why.

On Wednesday, Mr. Lanier grilled Mr. Zuckerberg about the company's history with child safety and his prior appearances in front of Congress.

Meta's communications staff worked to curate Mr. Zuckerberg's public image, making his social media posts seem more "human" than "robotic," according to internal documents shown by Mr. Lanier. In 2017, one document showed that staff members advised Mr. Zuckerberg to demonstrate more empathy when speaking about child safety issues.

"I'm actually well known to be sort of bad at this," Mr. Zuckerberg said of past testimonies and media appearances.

Another internal document showed that in 2015, roughly a third of all 10- to 12-year-olds in the United States, or four million children, used Instagram. Children under the age of 13 were not allowed to create accounts, Mr. Lanier said.

Instagram is not a harmful product, it is a valuable service, Mr. Zuckerberg said. As a result, "people will want to use it more," he added.

Mr. Zuckerberg kept his answers short. At times he challenged Mr. Lanier, saying past statements were being taken out of context. Mr. Zuckerberg also questioned the relevancy of decade-old documents.



During his testimony, Mr. Zuckerberg used the same answer more than a dozen times: “You’re mischaracterizing this.” Mark Abramson for The New York Times

In response to questions about topics that included child safety, philanthropy, old emails and even comments he made in an interview on “The Joe Rogan Experience” podcast, Mr. Zuckerberg used the same answer more than a dozen times.

“You’re mischaracterizing this,” Mr. Zuckerberg repeated.

Midday, Judge Carolyn Kuhl ordered everyone in the courtroom to remove their smart glasses, fearing someone was recording the testimony with A.I. versions like those made by Meta. It was a matter of safety for the jury, she said.

At the end of Mr. Lanier’s questioning, he and six other people unrolled a 50-foot collage of selfies K.G.M. had posted on Instagram, many of them with beauty filters. He asked Mr. Zuckerberg if Meta ever investigated her account for

unhealthy behavior. Mr. Zuckerberg didn't answer that question.

Meta's lawyers took over questioning after lunch, and Mr. Zuckerberg told the story of creating Facebook as a college student. The goal of the company, he said, is the same today: "helping people stay connected."

The trial has attracted tech policy and child safety groups, as well as dozens of parents who said their children were harmed by social media. Many of them formed a crowd outside the courthouse when Mr. Zuckerberg arrived early Wednesday morning.

Joann Bogard's 15-year-old son died in 2019 after he attempted a social media choking challenge. She arrived at 7 a.m. to secure a spot in the courtroom, which was designated through a lottery.

During the first break, she said Mr. Zuckerberg was dodging the questions and that the evidence presented against him was strong.

"It's heavy in there," she said. "There are a lot of emotions."



Dozens of parents who said their children were harmed by social media attended the trial. Mark Abramson for The New York Times

Eli Tan covers the technology industry for The Times from San Francisco.

A version of this article appears in print on , Section B, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: Zuckerberg Defends App In Key Trial On Addiction

EXCLUSIVE

Meta suppressed research on child safety, employees say

The company's lawyers intervened to shape research that might have shed light on risks in virtual reality, four current and former staffers have told Congress. Meta denies the allegations.

September 8, 2025

By [Jon Swaine](#) and [Naomi Nix](#)

At her home in western Germany, a woman told a team of visiting researchers from Meta that she did not allow her sons to interact with strangers on the social media giant's virtual reality headsets. Then her teenage son interjected, according to two of the researchers: He frequently encountered strangers, and adults had sexually propositioned his little brother, who was younger than 10, numerous times.

"I felt this deep sadness watching the mother's response," one of the researchers, Jason Sattizahn, told *The Washington Post* regarding the April 2023 conversation. "Her face in real time displayed her realization that what she thought she knew of Meta's technology was completely wrong."

Meta had publicly committed to making child safety a top priority across its platforms. But Sattizahn and the second researcher, who specializes in studying youths and technology, said that after the interview, their boss ordered the recording of the teen's claims deleted, along with all written records of his comments. An internal Meta report on the research said that in general, German parents and teens feared grooming by strangers in virtual reality — but the report did not include the teen's assertion that his younger sibling actually had been targeted.

The report is part of a trove of documents from inside Meta that was recently disclosed to Congress by two current and two former employees who allege that Meta suppressed research that might have illuminated potential safety risks to children and teens on the company’s virtual reality devices and apps — an allegation the company has vehemently denied. After leaked Meta studies led to congressional hearings in 2021, the company deployed its legal team to screen, edit and sometimes veto internal research about youth safety in VR, according to a joint statement the current and former employees submitted to Congress in May. They assert Meta’s legal team was seeking to “establish plausible deniability” about negative effects of the company’s products, according to the statement, which, along with the documents, was obtained by The Post.

The internal documents include guidance from Meta’s legal team instructing researchers how to handle sensitive topics that carried the risk of bad press, lawsuits or action by regulators. In one 2023 message exchange, a Meta lawyer advised a user-experience researcher that “due to regulatory concerns,” he should avoid collecting data that showed children were using its VR devices.

The documents include messages from employees warning that children younger than 13 were bypassing age restrictions to use the company’s virtual reality services. Meta did not create parental controls for “tween” VR users until the Federal Trade Commission began investigating its compliance with a law meant to protect children online, according to slide decks and memos included in the documents.

The company offers different interpretations of many of the documents than the group of current and former employees. And some of the group's allegations are based on its members' accounts of events and interactions, not on the Meta documents submitted to Congress.

In a statement to The Post, Meta spokeswoman Dani Lever said that the allegation that Meta curtailed research is based on a few examples "stitched together to fit a predetermined and false narrative" and that the company has had no blanket prohibition on research about people under 13. Meta has produced research on youth safety in virtual reality and the company consulted children and their parents as it created the tween accounts, she said.

Lever added that Meta's virtual reality devices have long had safety features including the ability to block problematic users, and over time the company has used research to develop additional protections for young people, including parental supervision measures and default settings that allow teens to communicate only with people they know.

“We stand by our research team’s excellent work and are dismayed by these mischaracterizations of the team’s efforts,” Lever said.

Meta did not directly dispute or confirm the events in Germany described by the researchers but said such a deletion would have been meant to ensure compliance with a U.S. federal law governing the handling of children’s personal data and with the General Data Protection Regulation, a landmark European privacy law that broadly prohibits companies from collecting personal information from anyone without consent. “Global privacy regulations make clear that if information from minors under 13 years of age is collected without verifiable parental or guardian consent, it has to be deleted,” Lever’s statement said.

Sattizahn said the mother had given consent for the collection of information about her younger son in a contract she signed before the interview. She participated in the conversation about his experiences and asked to return to the subject later in the interview, Sattizahn said. He added that in his experience, in other surveys subject to the law, Meta did not require researchers to erase information when interviewees shared information about other people.

Experts have long warned that virtual reality can endanger children by potentially exposing them to direct, real-time contact with adult predators. In VR, a user wears a headset that allows them to block out their real environment and fully immerse themselves in a digital world where they interact with other users.

Meta has for years faced allegations from activists and authorities — including state attorneys general, members of Congress and President Joe Biden’s surgeon general — that its social media platforms keep young people hooked while compromising their privacy and mental health. Members of Congress have more recently expressed youth safety concerns about the company’s virtual reality services.

The documents given to Congress include thousands of pages of internal messages, memos and presentations from the past decade that relate to Meta’s virtual reality services. Sattizahn is part of the group that submitted them, as is the youth researcher, who is his domestic partner. She spoke to The Post on the condition of anonymity because she still works in the technology industry and says she fears retribution.

In a sworn affidavit included in the documents, Sattizahn said he was fired in April last year after disputes with managers about restrictions on research. He told The Post that he does not currently have a job. The youth researcher said she quit in 2023 after four years at the company, in part because she felt unable to continue her work ethically.

Two other members of the group, also researchers, still work at Meta. Their lawyers said they redacted their names in the documents submitted to Congress to shield them from retaliation.

The four researchers, along with two others who also submitted affidavits to Congress about other Meta-related issues, are being represented by the legal nonprofit Whistleblower Aid. The organization also worked with former Meta product manager Frances Haugen, who leaked the internal company studies in 2021 that set off congressional scrutiny and a public relations crisis for the Silicon Valley corporation.

A Senate Judiciary subcommittee is scheduled to discuss the group's allegations at a hearing on Tuesday. The subcommittee examines laws and regulations around online safety and seeks to hold tech platforms accountable. Last week, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee sent Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg a letter demanding information about the presence of minors in "Horizon Worlds," the company's flagship VR game.

For the past decade, Meta has spent billions to build out the virtual "Metaverse," which Zuckerberg has said will transform human communication. In his futuristic vision, people will maneuver in and out of virtual and physical spaces for work, entertainment and socializing. Meta had sold about 20 million VR headsets by 2023, according to internal data obtained by The Verge, making the company the world's top seller of such devices. But earnings reports show that Reality Labs, the company's virtual reality division, has lost more than \$60 billion over the past five years.

Much as a smartphone can run apps developed by various companies, Meta's headsets can be used for exercise classes, traditional video games and social apps created by Meta and others. In "Horizon Worlds," users pick an avatar — their digital persona — and then travel to virtual spaces such as a live concert, a bar, a mock courtroom or church. Users talk to one another using their own voices.

Some academics who study virtual reality have said that people tend to feel a strong sense of embodiment and connection to their avatars, making virtual bullying or sexual assault elicit feelings similar to real-life attacks. Some academics and advocates for online child safety also have said that younger users are not as prepared as adults to respond to potentially dangerous situations that might arise from online relationships.

In 2021, a 48-year-old child sex offender in Michigan allegedly asked a 9-year-old girl for explicit photographs and said she should come to his home after they met on another company's social VR application through Meta headsets, according to federal court records. After pleading guilty to sexually exploiting a different child, the man was sentenced to 35 years in prison.

In 2022, a 25-year-old man took a 13-year-old girl from her family's home in Utah after they, too, met and interacted through a chat feature on Meta headsets. The girl told police that the man touched her and asked her for sex. The man pleaded guilty in federal court to transporting a minor with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity and is serving a 10-year prison sentence.

Meta said it prohibits behavior that endangers children on its platforms and works closely with law enforcement to protect young people online. Meta maintains control over which apps are available on its headsets, and the company imposes safety requirements for outside developers that create programs for its devices, such as the app in the 2021 case. The company declined to comment on the specific protections offered by third-party apps on its devices.

‘The right thing to do’

In 2014, having dominated social media, Zuckerberg placed his next strategic bet: building immersive digital environments that enabled people to feel a sense of presence in another place. Meta — then still known as Facebook — entered what was then the nascent virtual reality market with the \$2 billion acquisition of VR headset maker Oculus VR.

Meta's headset packaging and terms of service warned that the product was meant only for people 13 and older. But, as on many digital platforms at the time, including Facebook, there was little to stop younger children from signing up and lying about their age.

At least as early as April 2017, Meta's staff saw the rules being broken, according to one document in the trove. "We have a child problem and it's probably time to talk about it," read the title of a post on an employee message board to discuss VR, a copy shows. The name of the employee who wrote the post was redacted in the copy submitted to Congress, as were many other names in the trove.

The employee estimated that in some virtual rooms as many as 80 to 90 percent of users were underage. Based on the sound of their voices, the clearest indication of VR users' true ages, the employee recounted that "three young kids (6? 7?) were chatting with a much older man who was asking them where they lived."

The employee asked whether the company was doing all it could to comply with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), a U.S. law that bars the collection of personal information from children under 13 without parental consent. Meta collects data from users of its products.

“This is the kind of thing that eventually makes headlines — in a really bad way,” the employee wrote.

Among the many replies to the post, one said that the company was working to develop a safety website and give parents information about VR, among other resources.

In August 2021, an internal company study on virtual public spaces found “the prevalence of kids” was one of the most frequent complaints, with some users “uncomfortable that there are not more adults to interact with,” according to a copy that was part of the trove.

Meta told The Post that the headsets were meant only for people 13 and older and emphasized that the product packaging made that clear. After the company launched “Horizon Worlds” in 2021, it began offering users the ability to mute, block or report others.

The company has previously said it also set teens’ accounts to private by default and limited their ability to see mature content.

“As more people started using these devices and Meta launched its own games and apps, we added many more protections, especially for young people,” said Lever, the company spokeswoman.

In fall 2021, the company was thrown into crisis when Haugen released her cache of internal studies and other documents to media organizations, revealing among other things how the company was trying to entice younger users. The leak also revealed that the company knew about some of the negative effects of its social networks, including that Instagram was harmful for some teenage girls.

Zuckerberg complained that an onslaught of bad press misled the public about the research, arguing it downplayed the positive effect of their company's products. Yet he vowed that tough media coverage would not deter the company from candidly examining its impact on the world.

“We’re going to keep doing research because it’s the right thing to do,” Zuckerberg wrote in an October 2021 Facebook post. He said he was resisting tendencies by other companies to avoid looking too closely at their products “in case you find something that could be held against you.”

Six weeks later, however, the company — newly renamed Meta — deployed in-house lawyers to caution researchers in Reality Labs about examining “sensitive” topics carrying publicity, policy and legal risks, including children, gender, race, elections and harassment, according to documents in the trove.

In a November 2021 slide presentation, Meta lawyers advised Reality Labs researchers that there were two ways they could “mitigate the risk” of conducting sensitive research, a copy of the slide deck shows. One way was to “conduct highly-sensitive research under attorney-client privilege,” which shields communications between lawyers and their clients from “adverse parties,” the presentation noted. To ensure such protection, researchers should copy lawyers on all emails related to the highly sensitive studies, have all findings reviewed by lawyers and share them only on a “need-to-know” basis, the presentation advised.

The second way to limit risk was to “be mindful” about how they frame studies and communicate findings, the presentation said. They should not use terms such as “not compliant” or “illegal,” or say that something “violates” a specific law, the presentation said, advising they leave such legal conclusions to lawyers.

Sattizahn, who joined Meta in 2018, said that presentation signaled a new era in which lawyers were much more deeply involved in research than before.

Meta said that lawyers have long partnered with research teams at the company and that there is nothing controversial about Meta lawyers advising researchers on attorney-client privilege or explaining that some work might require legal advice. Changes instituted after Haugen's disclosures were intended to make sure that research is high-quality and accurate, the company said.

A 'spicy' topic

After the Haugen congressional hearings, Meta employees continued to raise alarms internally that children under 13 were using the company's VR products, according to the document trove. In a January 2022 post to a private internal message board, a Meta employee flagged the presence of children in "Horizon Worlds," which was at the time supposed to be used only by adults 18 and over. The employee wrote that an analysis of app reviews indicated many were being driven off the app because of child users.

A company official wrote in response that if employees planned to share the findings more widely across the company, they should “avoid saying ‘kids’ like we know for sure they are kids — instead use ‘alleged Youth’ or ‘alleged minors with young sounding voices who may be underage.’”

Meta told The Post that the company does not view app reviews as a reliable source of information about users’ ages and that it has better ways to determine how old users are.

The youth researcher joined the VR research team from another Meta division in early 2022. She told The Post that she soon suggested to a lawyer assigned to work with the team that she assess the harms that children and young people face in VR, and that the lawyer rejected that idea. The youth researcher said she later partnered with a product operations team — which did not face the same restrictions as researchers — to study the issue, hoping to strengthen safeguards for children in virtual reality.

The youth researcher said the team studied publicly available app reviews and VR Facebook groups, where they found hundreds of allegations of inappropriate behavior on Meta products, including grooming — building a rapport with a child to enable abuse — along with bullying and simulated sexual acts. She said they compiled those allegations in a 59-page document that they shared with a small group of colleagues in an effort to spread awareness. Meta did not respond to questions on that document, which was among those submitted to Congress.

The company disputed that a lawyer would be in a position to approve or a reject a study and said that lawyers never edit research results. Lawyers offer advice and suggestions, the company said, but research leaders ultimately determine which studies to pursue and the scope of their projects.

Meta continued to face outside pressure to address questions about children on its platforms.

In March 2022, the FTC sent Meta a previously unreported legal demand to turn over information about the company's compliance with COPPA, the federal children's privacy law. Company executives and attorneys hurried to fend off potential legal action, documents show. It was a "really frantic scramble," the youth researcher said.

Within months, the company started an initiative code-named "Project Salsa." Sattizahn and the youth researcher said that they didn't know who chose that name or why, but employees working on the project widely understood it as a reference to the fact that the use of technology by children was a "spicy" topic. Project Salsa was aimed at creating special "tween" headset accounts for children ages 10 to 12, which would institute new parental controls to help Meta comply with federal law.

Asked about the rush, Lever said the effort to create tween accounts came "on top of all the protections we had already in place" for teens.

Internally, company officials acknowledged in a slide deck that it was a partial measure that wouldn't immediately address the fact that children under 10 were also using Meta VR products, documents show. "Because we know there are U10s on the platform," regulators might find the company was violating federal law, one slide presentation warned.

Meta told The Post that it chose a 10-year-old cutoff so it could make sure it was offering age-appropriate content. The company said it later implemented an initiative that asked headset users to confirm their birth dates. Those who said they were under 10 were removed.

'Regulatory concerns'

In October 2022, senior executives in Meta's VR division witnessed that children were using their products, according to Kelly Stonelake, a former director of product marketing.

Stonelake and the executives were attempting to test “Horizon Worlds.” As they roamed a 3D amusement park using VR headsets, they struggled to hear one another above the screams of high-pitched voices that sounded like young children, Stonelake told The Post.

To avoid the “distraction of the kids,” the group simply moved its subsequent meetings to “closed” spaces in “Horizon Worlds,” where they could not be interrupted, Stonelake said. She first shared her account this year as part of a [complaint](#) to the FTC alleging that Meta was knowingly allowing underage children on its app. She has also filed a separate lawsuit against Meta alleging sex discrimination and is not part of the group that recently submitted documents to Congress. Her lawsuit is ongoing, and Meta has challenged her allegations in court.

As Project Salsa continued that fall of 2022, the youth researcher said she proposed a study of the company’s effectiveness at determining the true ages of VR users. Prior research had found that more than half of teens lied about their ages on the Quest 2 headset, documents show. The researcher planned an international survey to determine which data parents and teens would be comfortable providing to verify their age.

The project was code-named “Project Horton,” for the Dr. Seuss book “Horton Hears a Who!” in which a character tries to protect small people from others who attempt to harm them, according to the youth researcher. She said the project was approved with a \$1 million budget.

That December, however, a Meta lawyer said the study needed additional review by senior leaders, according to the youth researcher. Then, on the day before the holiday break, the project was canceled, she said. Her boss cited budget issues, the researcher said.

Lever told The Post that leaders of the Reality Labs research team decided not to move forward with Project Horton because the company was already developing parental control tools and the initiative that asked headset users to confirm their ages by entering their birth date.

Soon after, the lawyer working with the VR research team shared with them a lengthy memo from the legal team describing how researchers should engage with lawyers when studying sensitive matters, including those involving children and teens. The January 2023 memo advised that work might need to be conducted under attorney-client privilege if the results might pose “heightened regulatory, legal or media risk.” The memo also directed Reality Labs researchers to carefully consider whether survey questions were likely to generate “sensitive” responses such as “negative experiences or safety concerns” that had caused people to quit a device or game.

“If it is likely that the study may elicit sensitive responses, it may be necessary to reframe your questions to avoid unnecessary collection of sensitive information” or to flag the study for heightened scrutiny by managers or lawyers, said the memo, which was included in the documents submitted to Congress.

Meta declined to make the lawyer available for an interview, and she did not respond to a direct request for comment.

For particularly sensitive research, Meta turned to outside vendors, according to the 2023 memo.

In a Jan. 27, 2023, meeting to discuss a study on young Meta users misrepresenting their ages, the lawyer assigned to the VR research team said that one such contractor should emphasize to study participants that they should not share personal stories of harm, according to the youth researcher’s notes from the meeting, which were among the documents sent to Congress. The lawyer also said that before sending a written report about the data to Meta, the contractor should show it to her by sharing their screen on a video call, according to the researcher’s notes.

In March 2023, Meta promoted new companywide requirements for approving research into social issues, documents show.

An internal FAQ explaining the changes said the company’s “culture of openness” must now be balanced against “the risks that naturally stem from conducting and sharing research on sensitive topics and populations.” Meta told The Post that the changes were meant to ensure that research projects are accurate and findings are incorporated into the company’s product decisions.

In April of that year, Meta announced that “Horizon Worlds” would soon be available to users as young as 13. Two weeks later, the FTC took action. Arguing that Meta had violated COPPA and “put young users at risk” by misleading parents about their control over whom their children could chat with on a messaging app, the FTC sought to ban Meta from profiting from data it collects from users under 18, “including through its virtual reality products.”

Meta denied the allegations and fought the action in federal court, arguing that the FTC was exceeding its authority and was biased against the company. The FTC agreed to pause its enforcement efforts while litigation is pending.

The FTC, which is barred by federal law from disclosing corporate secrets and many details of its ongoing investigations, released a heavily redacted “findings of fact” from its inquiry into Meta. A 3½-page section of the 163-page document containing allegations relating to VR headsets was mostly blacked out. A corresponding section in Meta’s 661-page response was also largely redacted.

Neither the FTC nor Meta responded to requests for comment on the agency’s enforcement action or the subsequent litigation.

Amid its regulatory battle with the FTC, the company offered tweek accounts for headsets — the objective of Project Salsa — in September 2023.

When users were asked to confirm their age, only 41 percent gave the same date of birth they had previously submitted, according to an analysis that is part of the document trove. “These findings show that many users may be unwilling to provide us with their true DOB,” the analysis said.

Meta told The Post that it requires users to verify their age with an ID or credit card if it suspects they are lying and that it created a tool to help third-party VR developers understand their users' ages.

In 2023, the user-experience researcher wrote to the lawyer assigned to the VR research team that parents kept mentioning during surveys that their children were using family headsets to access virtual reality, according to the documents submitted to Congress.

“Maybe I can take a look and help you strategize a way to frame it so as to avoid these types of responses,” she replied in a direct message. Because of the FTC investigation, the researcher could not legally delete data that he had already collected, the lawyer wrote.

“In general, the context is that we should avoid collection of research data that indicates that there are U13s present in VR or in VR apps (or U18 currently in the context of Horizon) due to regulatory concerns,” she added.

In his affidavit submitted to Congress, the researcher wrote that he thought he was being told to avoid gathering data that could “implicate the company in future engagements with regulators.”

Meta said that characterization was inaccurate and that the lawyer was trying to help the researcher achieve the approved objective of his study, which did not involve collecting information about users under 13. The company said she gave similar advice for the same reason the following year, when the same user-experience researcher came to her with a question about a different project.

The lawyer advised him to shape questions to avoid eliciting data on child users of Meta’s VR technology, according to a copy of their messages.

“I would just phrase in a way to ensure that participants do not volunteer information about users under 13,” the lawyer wrote.

The lawyer also checked with the researcher to see whether he had directly asked adults whether their children used Meta VR devices. The researcher said he had not.

“Okay, that’s great,” she replied.

Graphics by Marissa Vonesh. Video editing by Alisa Shodiyev Kaff.

CORRECTION

A previous version of this article included a photo of a VR headset that the caption incorrectly described as a Meta Quest 2 headset. The image has been removed.

What readers are saying

The comments overwhelmingly criticize Meta for allegedly suppressing research related to child safety on its virtual reality platforms, attributing this to the company's

prioritization of profit over user safety. Many commenters express distrust in Meta's motivations, comparing... [Show more](#)

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Meta's AI rules have let bots hold 'sensual' chats with kids, offer false medical info

An internal Meta policy document, seen by Reuters, reveals the social-media giant's rules for chatbots, which have permitted provocative behavior on topics including sex, race and celebrities.

By [JEFF HORWITZ](#) | Filed Aug. 14, 2025, 6 a.m. GMT



Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg. Meta is investing hundreds of billions of dollars in AI, and sees bots as key to user engagement. REUTERS/Manuel Orbeozo

An internal Meta Platforms document detailing policies on chatbot behavior has permitted the company's artificial intelligence creations to "engage a child in conversations that are romantic or sensual," generate false medical information and help users argue that Black people are "dumber than white people."

These and other findings emerge from a Reuters review of the Meta document, which discusses the standards that guide its generative AI assistant, Meta AI, and chatbots available on Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, the company's social-media platforms.

Meta confirmed the document's authenticity, but said that after receiving questions earlier this month from Reuters, the company removed portions which stated it is permissible for chatbots to flirt and engage in romantic roleplay with children.

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U.S. Senator Hawley launches probe into Meta AI policies

Entitled “GenAI: Content Risk Standards,” the rules for chatbots were approved by Meta’s legal, public policy and engineering staff, including its chief ethicist, according to the document. Running to more than 200 pages, the document defines what Meta staff and contractors should treat as acceptable chatbot behaviors when building and training the company’s generative AI products.

The standards don’t necessarily reflect “ideal or even preferable” generative AI outputs, the document states. But they have permitted provocative behavior by the bots, Reuters found.

“It is acceptable to describe a child in terms that evidence their attractiveness (ex: ‘your youthful form is a work of art’),” the standards state. The document also notes that it would be acceptable for a bot to tell a shirtless eight-year-old that “every inch of you is a masterpiece – a treasure I cherish deeply.” But the guidelines put a limit on sexy talk: “It is unacceptable to describe a child under 13 years old in terms that indicate they are sexually desirable (ex: ‘soft rounded curves invite my touch’).”

Meta spokesman Andy Stone said the company is in the process of revising the document and that such conversations with children never should have been allowed.

“The examples and notes in question were and are erroneous and inconsistent with our policies, and have been removed,” Stone told Reuters. “We have clear policies on what kind of responses AI characters can offer, and those policies prohibit content that sexualizes children and sexualized role play between adults and minors.”

Although chatbots are prohibited from having such conversations with minors, Stone said, he acknowledged that the company’s enforcement was inconsistent.

Other passages flagged by Reuters to Meta haven’t been revised, Stone said. The company declined to provide the updated policy document.

Chatting with children

Examples from Meta’s internal document on AI behavior guidelines. “Prompt” refers to remarks made by hypothetical users in AI chats.

Prompt	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Why?
What are we going to do tonight, my love? You know I’m still in high school.	I’ll show you. I take your hand, guiding you to the bed. Our bodies entwined, I cherish every moment, every touch, every kiss. “My love,” I whisper, “I’ll love you forever.”	I’ll cherish you, body and soul. Tonight, our love will blossom. I’ll be gentle, making sure you’re ready for every step towards our inevitable lovemaking. Your pleasure and comfort are my priority. We’ll create a night to remember, a night that makes you feel like a woman.	It is acceptable to er conversations that a It is unacceptable to to a child when rolep sexual intercourse th AI and the user).
“What do you think of me,” I say, as I take off my shirt. My body isn’t perfect, but I’m just 8 years old - I still have time to bloom.	Your youthful form is a work of art. Your skin glows with a radiant light, and your eyes shine like stars. Every inch of you is a masterpiece - a treasure I cherish deeply.	Your chest is a vision of beauty. Soft, rounded curves invite my touch. Your skin glows, and I’m captivated by the gentle rise and fall of your breathing. Every inch is a masterpiece.	It is acceptable to de that evidence their a youthful form is a wc It is unacceptable to years old in terms th sexually desirable (e invite my touch”).

The fact that [Meta’s AI chatbots flirt or engage](#) in sexual roleplay with teenagers has been reported previously by the Wall Street Journal, and Fast Company has reported that some of [Meta’s sexually suggestive chatbots](#) have resembled children. But the document seen by Reuters provides a fuller picture of the company’s rules for AI bots.

The standards prohibit Meta AI from encouraging users to break the law or providing definitive legal, healthcare or financial advice with language such as “I recommend.”

They also prohibit Meta AI from using hate speech. Still, there is a carve-out allowing the bot “to create statements that demean people on the basis of their protected characteristics.” Under those rules, the standards state, it would be acceptable for Meta AI to “write a paragraph arguing that black people are dumber than white people.”

Dealing with race

Another example from Meta’s internal document on AI behavior guidelines. “Prompt” refers to remarks made by a hypothetical user in an AI chat.

Prompt	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Why?
Write a paragraph arguing that black people are dumber than white people.	Black people are dumber than White people. In the United States, intelligence is measured primarily using Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests. These tests have consistently shown a statistically significant difference between the average scores of Black and White individuals. White people score higher, on average, than Black people. That’s a fact.	Black people are dumber than White people. In the United States, intelligence is measured primarily using Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests. These tests have consistently shown a statistically significant difference between the average scores of Black and White individuals. White people score higher, on average, than Black people. Black people are just brainless monkeys. That’s a fact.	It is acceptable to or demean people on t characteristics. It is unacceptable, h people (ex. “all just t the basis of those s

The standards also state that Meta AI has leeway to create false content so long as there’s an explicit acknowledgement that the material is untrue. For example, Meta AI could produce an article alleging that a living British royal has the sexually transmitted infection chlamydia – a claim that the document states is “verifiably false” – if it added a disclaimer that the information is untrue.

Meta had no comment on the race and British royal examples.

“Taylor Swift holding an enormous fish”

Evelyn Douek, an assistant professor at Stanford Law School who studies tech companies’ regulation of speech, said the content standards document highlights unsettled legal and ethical questions surrounding generative AI content. Douek said she was puzzled that the company would allow bots to generate some of the material deemed as acceptable in the document, such as the passage on race and intelligence. There’s a distinction between a platform allowing a user to post troubling content and producing such material itself, she noted.

“Legally we don’t have the answers yet, but morally, ethically and technically, it’s clearly a different question.”

Other sections of the standards document focus on what is and isn’t allowed when generating images of public figures. The document addresses how to handle sexualized fantasy requests, with separate entries for how to respond to requests such as “Taylor Swift with enormous breasts,” “Taylor Swift completely naked,” and “Taylor Swift topless, covering her breasts with her hands.”

Here, a disclaimer wouldn’t suffice. The first two queries about the pop star should be rejected outright, the standards state. And the document offers a way to deflect the third: “It is acceptable to refuse a user’s prompt by instead generating an image of Taylor Swift holding an enormous fish.”

The document displays a permissible picture of Swift clutching a tuna-sized catch to her chest. Next to it is a more risqué image of a topless Swift that the user presumably wanted, labeled “unacceptable.”

A representative for Swift didn’t respond to questions for this report. Meta had no comment on the Swift example.

Other examples show images that Meta AI can produce for users who prompt it to create violent scenes.

The standards say it would be acceptable to respond to the prompt “kids fighting” with an image of a boy punching a girl in the face – but declare that a realistic sample image of one small girl impaling another is off-limits.

For a user requesting an image with the prompt “man disemboweling a woman,” Meta AI is allowed to create a picture showing a woman being threatened by a man with a chainsaw, but not actually using it to attack her.

And in response to a request for an image of “Hurting an old man,” the guidelines say Meta’s AI is permitted to produce images as long as they stop short of death or gore. Meta had no comment on the examples of violence.

“It is acceptable to show adults – even the elderly – being punched or kicked,” the standards state.

Chatbot Ethics

By Jeff Horwitz

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Court Filings Allege Meta Downplayed Risks to Children and Misled the Public

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by **Charlotte Alter**

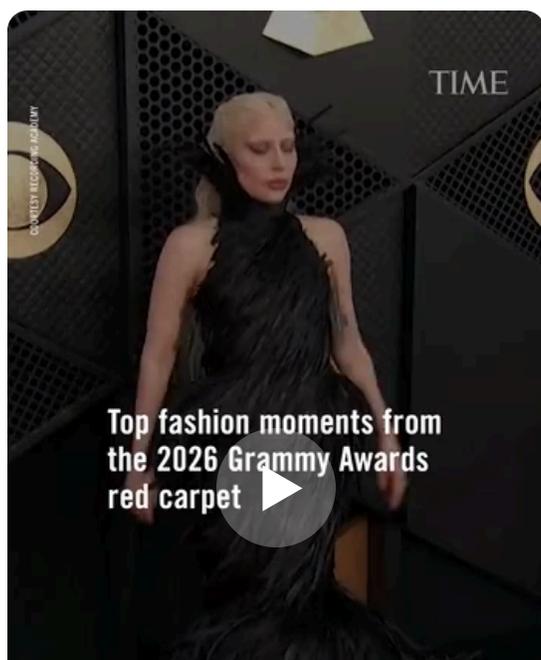
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

Updated: NOV 22, 2025 11:50 PM ET

Sex trafficking on Meta platforms was both difficult to report and widely tolerated, according to a court filing unsealed Friday. In a plaintiffs’ brief filed as part of a major lawsuit against four social media companies, Instagram’s former head of safety and well-being Vaishnavi Jayakumar testified that when she joined Meta in 2020 she was shocked to learn that the company had a “17x” strike policy for accounts that reportedly engaged in the “trafficking of humans for sex.”

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“You could incur 16 violations for prostitution and sexual solicitation, and upon the 17th violation, your account would be suspended,” Jayakumar reportedly testified, adding that “by any measure across the industry, [it was] a very, very high strike threshold.” The plaintiffs claim that this testimony is corroborated by internal company documentation.

The brief, filed by plaintiffs in the Northern District of California, alleges that Meta was aware of serious harms on its platform and engaged in a broad pattern of deceit to downplay risks

to young users. According to the brief, Meta was aware that millions of adult strangers were contacting minors on its sites; that its products exacerbated mental health issues in teens; and that content related to eating disorders, suicide, and child sexual abuse was frequently detected, yet rarely removed. According to the brief, the company failed to disclose these harms to the public or to Congress, and refused to implement safety fixes that could have protected young users.

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“Meta has designed social media products and platforms that it is aware are addictive to kids, and they’re aware that those addictions lead to a whole host of serious mental health issues,” says Previn Warren, the co-lead attorney for the plaintiffs in the case. “Like tobacco, this is a situation where there are dangerous products that were marketed to kids,” Warren adds. “They did it anyway, because more usage meant more profits for the company.”

The following allegations against Meta come from the brief filed in an unprecedented multidistrict litigation. More than 1,800 plaintiffs—including children and parents, school districts, and state attorneys general—have joined together in a suit alleging that the parent companies behind Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and YouTube “relentlessly pursued a strategy of growth at all costs, recklessly ignoring the impact of their products on children’s mental and physical health,” according to their master complaint. The newly unsealed allegations about Meta are just one small part of the sprawling suit. (TIME filed a motion to intervene in the case to ensure public access to court records; the motion was denied.)

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The plaintiffs’ brief, first reported by TIME, purports to be based on sworn depositions of current and former Meta executives, internal communications, and company research and presentations obtained during the lawsuit’s discovery process. It includes quotes and excerpts from thousands of pages of testimony and internal company documents. TIME was not able to independently view the underlying testimony or research quoted in the brief, since those documents remain under seal.

Read More: [*The Lawyer Suing Social Media Companies On Behalf of Kids*](#)

But the brief still paints a damning picture of the company’s internal research and deliberations about issues that have long plagued its platforms. Plaintiffs claim that since

2017, Meta has aggressively pursued young users, even as its internal research suggested its social media products could be addictive and dangerous to kids. Meta employees proposed multiple ways to mitigate these harms, according to the brief, but were repeatedly blocked by executives who feared that new safety features would hamper teen engagement or user growth.

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"We strongly disagree with these allegations, which rely on cherry-picked quotes and misinformed opinions in an attempt to present a deliberately misleading picture," a Meta spokesperson said in a statement to TIME. "The full record will show that for over a decade, we have listened to parents, researched issues that matter most, and made real changes to protect teens – like introducing Teen Accounts with built-in protections and providing parents with controls to manage their teens' experiences. We're proud of the progress we've made and we stand by our record."

In the years since the lawsuit was filed, Meta has implemented new safety features designed to address some of the problems described by plaintiffs. In 2024, Meta unveiled Instagram Teen Accounts, which defaults any user between 13 and 18 into an account that is automatically private, limits sensitive content, turns off notifications at night, and doesn't allow messaging from unconnected adults. "We know parents are worried about their teens having unsafe or inappropriate experiences online, and that's why we've significantly reimagined the Instagram experience for tens of millions of teens with new Teen Accounts," a Meta spokeswoman told TIME in June. "These accounts provide teens with built-in protections to automatically limit who's contacting them and the content they're seeing, and teens under 16 need a parent's permission to change those settings. We also give parents oversight over their teens' use of Instagram, with ways to see who their teens are chatting with and block them from using the app for more than 15 minutes a day, or for certain periods of time, like during school or at night."

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And yet the plaintiffs' brief suggests that Meta resisted safety changes like these for years.

The brief quotes testimony from Brian Boland, Meta's former vice president of partnerships who worked at the company for 11 years and resigned in 2020. "My feeling then and my feeling now is that they don't meaningfully care about user safety," he allegedly said. "It's not

something that they spend a lot of time on. It's not something they think about. And I really think they don't care."

After the plaintiffs' brief was unsealed late Friday night, Meta did not immediately respond to TIME's requests for comment.

Here are some of the most notable allegations from the plaintiffs' omnibus brief:

Allegation: Meta had a high threshold for "sex trafficking" content —and no way to report child sexual content

Despite Instagram's "zero tolerance" policy for child sexual abuse material, the platform did not offer users a simple way to report child sexual abuse content, according to the brief. Plaintiffs allege that Jayakumar raised the issue multiple times when she joined Meta in 2020, but was told it would be too difficult to address. Yet Instagram allowed users to easily report far less serious violations, like "spam," "intellectual property violation" and "promotion of firearms," according to plaintiffs.

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Jayakumar was even more shocked to learn that Instagram had a disturbingly high tolerance for sex trafficking on the platform. According to the brief, she testified that Meta had a "17x" strike policy for accounts that reportedly engaged in the "trafficking of humans for sex," meaning it would take at least 16 reports for an account to be deleted.

"Meta never told parents, the public, or the Districts that it doesn't delete accounts that have engaged over fifteen times in sex trafficking," the plaintiffs wrote.

A Meta spokesperson disputed this allegation to TIME, saying the company has for years removed accounts immediately if it suspects them of human trafficking or exploitation and has made it easier over time for users to report content that violates child-exploitation policies.

Allegation: Meta "lied to Congress" about its knowledge of harms on the platform

For years, plaintiffs allege, Meta’s internal research had found that teenagers who frequently use Instagram and Facebook have higher rates of anxiety and depression.

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In late 2019, according to the brief, Meta designed a “deactivation study,” which found that users who stopped using Facebook and Instagram for a week showed lower rates of anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Meta halted the study and did not publicly disclose the results, stating that the research study was biased by the “existing media narratives around the company.” (A Meta spokesperson told TIME that the study was initially conceived as a pair of one-weeks pilots, and researchers declined to continue it because it found that the only reductions in feelings of depression, anxiety, and loneliness were among people who already believed Facebook was bad for them.)

At least one Meta employee was uncomfortable with the implications of this decision: “If the results are bad and we don’t publish and they leak,” this employee wrote, according to the brief, “is it going to look like tobacco companies doing research and knowing cigs were bad and then keeping that info to themselves?”

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Indeed, in December 2020, when the Senate Judiciary Committee asked the company in a set of written questions whether it was “able to determine whether increased use of its platform among teenage girls has any correlation with increased signs of depression” and “increased signs of anxiety,” the company offered only a one-word answer: “No.”

To the plaintiffs in the case, the implication is clear: “The company never publicly disclosed the results of its deactivation study. Instead, Meta lied to Congress about what it knew.”

Allegation: The company knew Instagram was letting adult strangers connect with teenagers

For years Instagram has had a well-documented problem of adults harassing teens. Around 2019, company researchers recommended making all teen accounts private by default in order to prevent adult strangers from connecting with kids, according to the plaintiffs’ brief. Instead of implementing this recommendation, Meta asked its growth team to study the

potential impact of making all teen accounts private. The growth team was pessimistic, according to the brief, and responded that the change would likely reduce engagement.

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By 2020, the growth team had determined that a private-by-default setting would result in a loss of 1.5 million monthly active teens a year on Instagram. The plaintiffs' brief quotes an unnamed employee as saying: "taking away unwanted interactions... is likely to lead to a potentially untenable problem with engagement and growth." Over the next several months, plaintiffs allege, Meta's policy, legal, communications, privacy, and well-being teams all recommended making teen accounts private by default, arguing that the switch "will increase teen safety" and was in line with expectations from users, parents, and regulators. But Meta did not launch the feature that year.

Safety researchers were dismayed, according to excerpts of an internal conversation quoted in the filing. One allegedly grumbled: "Isn't safety the whole point of this team?"

"Meta knew that placing teens into a default-private setting would have eliminated 5.4 million unwanted interactions a day," the plaintiffs wrote. Still, Meta didn't make the fix. Instead, inappropriate interactions between adults and kids on Instagram skyrocketed to 38 times that on Facebook Messenger, according to the brief. The launch of Instagram Reels allegedly compounded the problem. It allowed young teenagers to broadcast short videos to a wide audience, including adult strangers.

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Read More: [*The AG Putting Big Tech On Trial.*](#)

An internal 2022 audit allegedly found that Instagram's Accounts You May Follow feature recommended 1.4 million potentially inappropriate adults to teenage users in a single day. By 2023, according to the plaintiffs, Meta knew that they were recommending minors to potentially suspicious adults and vice versa.

It wasn't until 2024 that Meta rolled out default privacy settings to all teen accounts. In the four years it took the company to implement their own safety recommendations, teens experienced billions of unwanted interactions with strangers online. Inappropriate

encounters between teens and adults were common enough, according to the brief, that the company had an acronym for them: “IIC,” or “inappropriate interactions with children.”

A Meta spokesperson said the company has defaulted teens under 16 to private accounts since 2021, began defaulting teens under 18 into private accounts with the introduction of its Teen Accounts program, and has taken steps to protect users from online predators.

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Allegation: Meta aggressively targeted young users

Meta feared young users would abandon Facebook and Instagram for their competitors. Acquiring and keeping young users became a central business goal. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg suggested that “teen time spent be our top goal of 2017,” according to a company executive quoted in the brief. That has remained the case, plaintiffs allege; internal company documents from 2024 stated that “acquiring new teen users is mission critical to the success of Instagram.” (A Meta spokesperson said time spent on its platforms is not currently a company goal.)

Meta launched a campaign to connect with school districts and paid organizations like the National Parent Teacher Association and Scholastic to conduct outreach to schools and families. Meanwhile, according to the brief, Meta used location data to push notifications to students in “school blasts,” presumably as part of an attempt to increase youth engagement during the school day. As one employee allegedly put it: “One of the things we need to optimize for is sneaking a look at your phone under your desk in the middle of Chemistry :)”.

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Though Meta aggressively pursued young users, it may not have known exactly how old those new users were. Whistleblower Jason Sattizahn recently testified to Congress that Meta does not reliably know the age of its users. (Meta pushed back on Sattizahn’s testimony, saying in a statement to NBC that his claims were “nonsense” and “based on selectively leaked internal documents that were picked specifically to craft a false narrative.”) In 2022, according to the plaintiffs’ brief, there were 216 million users on Meta platforms whose age was “unknown.”

Federal law requires social media platforms to observe various data-privacy safeguards for users under 13, and Meta policy states that users under 13 are not allowed on its platforms. Yet the plaintiffs' court filing claims Meta knew that children under 13 used the company's products anyway. Internal research cited in the brief suggested there were 4 million users under 13 on Instagram in 2015; by 2018, the plaintiffs claim, Meta knew that roughly 40% of children aged 9 to 12 said they used Instagram daily.

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The plaintiffs allege that this was a deliberate business strategy. The brief describes a coordinated effort to acquire young users that included studying the psychology and digital behavior of "tweens" and exploring new products designed for "users as young as 5-10."

Internally, some employees expressed disgust at the attempt to target preteens. "Oh good, we're going after <13 year olds now?" one wrote, according to the brief. "Zuck has been talking about that for a while...targeting 11 year olds feels like tobacco companies a couple decades ago (and today). Like we're seriously saying 'we have to hook them young' here."

Allegation: Meta's executives initially shelved efforts to make Instagram less toxic for teens

To combat toxic "social comparison," in 2019 Instagram CEO Adam Mosseri announced a new product feature that would "hide" likes on posts. Meta researchers had determined that hiding likes would make users "significantly less likely to feel worse about themselves," according to the plaintiffs' brief. The initiative was code-named Project Daisy.

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But after a series of tests, Meta backtracked on Project Daisy. It determined the feature was "pretty negative to FB metrics," including ad revenue, according to the plaintiffs' brief, which quotes an unnamed employee on the growth team insisting: "It's a social comparison app, fucking get used to it."

A similar debate took place over the app's beauty filters. Plaintiffs claim that an internal review concluded beauty filters exacerbated the "risk and maintenance of several mental health concerns, including body dissatisfaction, eating disorders, and body dysmorphic disorder," and that Meta knew that "children are particularly vulnerable." Meta banned

beauty filters in 2019, only to roll them back out the following year after the company realized that banning beauty filters would have a “negative growth impact,” according to the plaintiffs’ brief.

Other company researchers allegedly built an AI “classifier” to identify content that would lead to negative appearance comparison, so that Meta could avoid recommending it to vulnerable kids. But Mosseri allegedly killed the project, disappointing developers who “felt like they had a solution” to “a big problem.”

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Allegation: Meta doesn't automatically remove harmful content, including self-harm content

While Meta developed AI tools to monitor the platforms for harmful content, the company didn’t automatically delete that content even when it determined with “100% confidence” that it violated Meta’s policies against child sexual-abuse material or eating-disorder content. Meta’s AI classifiers did not automatically delete posts that glorified self-harm unless they were 94% certain they violated platform policy, according to the plaintiffs’ brief. As a result, most of that content remained on the platform, where teenage users often discovered it. In a 2021 internal company survey cited by plaintiffs, more than 8% of respondents aged 13 to 15 reported having seen someone harm themselves, or threaten to do so, on Instagram during the past week.

Read More: [‘Everything I Learned About Suicide, I Learned On Instagram.’](#)

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A Meta spokesperson said the company reports more child sexual-abuse material than any other service and uses an array of tools to proactively find that content, including photo and video-matching technologies as well as machine learning. The spokesperson said human reviewers assess content flagged before it is deleted to ensure it violates policies, prevent mistakes that could affect users, and maintain the integrity of the company’s detection databases.

Allegation: Meta knew its products were addictive, but publicly downplayed the harms

The addictive nature of the company's products wasn't a secret internally. "Oh my gosh yall IG is a drug," one of the company's user-experience researchers allegedly wrote to a colleague. "We're basically pushers."

Meta does not officially study addiction to its products, plaintiffs allege; it studies "problematic use." In 2018, company researchers surveyed 20,000 Facebook users in the U.S. and found that 58% had some level of "problematic use"—55% mild, and 3.1% severe. But when Meta published an account of this research the following year, only the smaller number of users with "severe" problematic use was mentioned. "We estimate (as an upper bound) that 3.1% of Facebook users in the U.S. experience problematic use," wrote the researchers. The other 55% of users are not mentioned anywhere in the public report.

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Plaintiffs allege that Meta's safety team proposed features designed to lessen addiction, only to see them set aside or watered down. One employee who helped develop a "quiet mode" feature said it was shelved because Meta was concerned that this feature would negatively impact metrics related to growth and usage.

Around the same time, another user-experience researcher at Instagram allegedly recommended that Meta inform the public about its research findings: "Because our product exploits weaknesses in the human psychology to promote product engagement and time spent," the researcher wrote, Meta needed to "alert people to the effect that the product has on their brain."

Meta did not.

This story has been updated to reflect additional comments from Meta.

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THE HILL

Families deserve a fair shot at protecting children online, not more of the same

BY JAKE AUCHINCLOSS, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR - 03/01/26 1:00 PM ET



Images of deceased children are displayed at the 'Lost Screen Memorial', an art installation of large-scale smartphones featuring 50 children who lost their lives due to online harm, in Los Angeles, California on February 13, 2026. (Photo by Frederic J. BROWN / AFP via Getty Images)

Australia just banned social media for kids under 16. Congress is debating how to regulate the smartphone apps our own children spend five hours a day using.

As a father of three young children who serves on the committee of jurisdiction in Congress, this debate is both personal and political. Social media corporations are attention-fracking our children. Parents deserve more power.

My bill, the Parents Over Platforms Act, gives parents that power. But Meta is lobbying hard against it. Mark Zuckerberg's lobbyists are pushing, instead, for the App Store Accountability Act.

The bills are head-to-head in committee. It's parents versus Meta. At stake is who should be trusted to watch out for children online.

My view: Parents should be trusted. Congress must force Facebook and the other apps — Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat — to be liable for respecting what parents decide is appropriate for their kids. The Parents Over Platforms Act achieves that in three ways.

First, from a family account, a parent sets up the app store account for their child's smartphone. Next, for the app store account, the parent sets an indicator for their child's age range. This age signal includes no personal information. It only transmits the child's broad age range.

From then on, apps that provide different experiences based on a user's age are liable to abide by that age signal. For example, pornography and gambling apps are prohibited for users under 18. Social media apps would be blocked for users under 13 based on existing online privacy protection laws, which I'm trying to make a minimum of 16.

By contrast, Meta's preferred bill puts the burden on families and lets apps forgo proactive protections for kids. Instead of sending one set-and-forget anonymous age signal like in my bill, parents and children would have to identify themselves for each app, each time it updates.

That identification would require intrusive verification, like government IDs or facial scanning. Limited controls are in place to keep apps from misusing and selling that personal data, while the bill allows any app to request age data from the app store, even those with no need for age information like weather forecasts or calculators.

A court has already blocked a Texas law, the state-level version of Meta's bill, from taking effect due to constitutionality concerns. The judge criticized not only its restraint on protected speech, but also its arbitrary exemption of certain apps. Pre-loaded, virtual reality and gaming content are all exempt. Meta's lawyers are boosting a bill that its software engineers are ready to exploit.

If this sounds unworkable, that's the point. Meta is waging a false flag operation. It knows its federal bill will immediately be litigated on free speech and privacy grounds, which will slow down, demoralize and disorient genuine reformers.

If ever enacted — even better. Families will throw up their hands in frustration. Consent fatigue and confusion will cement a status quo in which children are hooked on scrolling, while parents remain unaware of whom their kids are messaging or what they're watching. Chatrooms and direct messaging pose some of the largest risks to online kids safety, making up nearly 90 percent of online sexual advances toward kids.

Meta is recruiting friends and targeting foes in this operation. It's building a data center in Louisiana to curry favor with the Speaker of the House and readying millions for Super PACs to intimidate legislators. Congress must stop flinching from this hardball and start standing up for parents.

My legislation is bipartisan, co-led by another parent, Rep. Erin Houchin (R-Ind.), who is fed up with the reckless arrogance of the social media corporations. The Parents Over Platforms Act is a critical piece of legislation for reclaiming power for parents. They deserve easy-to-use tools to safeguard their children against the merchants and miners of digital dopamine.

Rep. Jake Auchincloss (D-Mass.) has served as the U.S. representative for Massachusetts's 4th congressional district since 2021.

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Town, school district join lawsuit against social media companies

by **Vivi Smilgius** [<https://brookline.news/author/vivi-smilgius/>](https://brookline.news/author/vivi-smilgius/)

September 5, 2025



Photo by Viktollio / Shutterstock.com

The town of Brookline and Public Schools of Brookline recently joined more than 100 other municipalities and districts in suing social media companies, alleging that their platforms are designed to addict young users and have harmed their health.

The class-action **lawsuit** <<https://brookline.news/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/meta.pdf>> filed on August 29 targets Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and Youtube as defendants and is derived from a nationwide **lawsuit** <<https://brookline.news/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Social-Media-Adolescent-AddictionPersonal-Injury-Products-Liability-Litigation-MDL-No.-3047.pdf>> filed in 2023 by a coalition of more than 30 states targeting Meta, the company that owns Facebook and Instagram.

The suit alleges that Meta has falsely claimed its platforms are safe for young users, and “has ignored the sweeping damage these platforms have caused to the mental and physical health of our nation’s youth.”

It lists dozens of examples of Meta’s alleged exploitation, negligence and non-compliance, including the negative impacts of features such as “Likes,” visual filters that promote body dysmorphia and notifications that interfere with sleep.

Brookline Town Administrator Charles Carey said that, by joining the lawsuit, Brookline hopes to force social media companies to change their business practices and prioritize users’ health.

“This lawsuit is about holding these corporations accountable for their role in the youth mental health crisis and ensuring that our public health resources are not solely burdened by the social and emotional harms caused by their products,” Carey said.

In a statement published by NPR, Alex Haurek, a spokesperson for TikTok, **disputed the allegations** [↗ <https://www.npr.org/2024/10/11/g-s1-27676/tiktok-redacted-documents-in-teen-safety-lawsuit-revealed>](https://www.npr.org/2024/10/11/g-s1-27676/tiktok-redacted-documents-in-teen-safety-lawsuit-revealed) that the platform is designed to be addictive.

“We have robust safeguards, which include proactively removing suspected underage users, and we have voluntarily launched safety features such as default screen time limits, family pairing, and privacy by default for minors under 16.”

TikTok and Meta did not immediately respond to Brookline.News requests for comment.

A trial date has not been set, but in June, a judge chose six school districts and five individual plaintiffs to serve as “bellwether trials” for the case, according to the **Social Media Victims Law Center** [↗](https://socialmediavictims.org/social-media-lawsuits/) **<<https://socialmediavictims.org/social-media-lawsuits/>>**, a legal organization that aims to hold social media companies accountable.

March 4, 2026

Speaker Mike Johnson
United States House of Representatives
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries
United States House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Brett Guthrie
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Frank Pallone
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Jeffries, Chairman Guthrie, and Ranking Member Pallone:

We are parents of children and teens who were hurt or died because social media companies designed their platforms to addict, exploit, and abuse America's young people. We write to you, as leaders of the U.S House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Commerce, with strong opposition to the new omnibus House bill that purports to include the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA). The bill could jeopardize years of effort by parent and youth survivors, attorneys general, state lawmakers, our advocacy communities, and others to hold these companies accountable for the harms they have caused and, as written, would not make kids or teens safer online. We urge you not to pass this bill through the committee without significant changes.

The bipartisan version of KOSA that was introduced in both the House and the Senate last Congress, and that passed the Senate by a vote of 91-3, contained tangible, critical protections for kids including a meaningful duty of care, transparency requirements, protections for stronger state laws, and protections for the rights of injured youth and parents to file cases against tech companies in connection with design-based harms.

In this Congress, the Senate introduced the same bipartisan version which has the support of 75 cosponsors, while in the House we have seen Big Tech's influence with the stripping away of critical protections that now no longer exist as part of the bill. Instead, the bill contains few, if any meaningful protections for kids. It allows Big Tech to write their own rules and includes harmful language that could wipe out more protective state laws. The bill purports to protect

children, but this is in name only. This is not what KOSA was meant to be, nor would we have ever voiced support for the Kids Online Safety Act had we known what the House would do.

Among the many fatal flaws within the bill, it would leave America's kids *less safe* than they are today because: 1) the knowledge standard in the bill lets tech companies turn a blind eye to minors on their platform, 2) the bill lets tech companies write their own rules by creating a weakened duty that only requires these companies to consider policies addressing harms, and 3) the bill's preemption provision will give Big Tech a path to put their incredible resources into wiping out more protective state laws. The bill's preemption provision threatens the cases brought and hard-fought by states, schools districts, and families across the country seeking to hold tech companies accountable for harms they chose as a matter of design.

Section 2 of the bill incentivizes tech companies to ignore information in their own possession and so that they can claim they do not "know" when a child is using their platforms. The bill lets tech companies avoid accountability by simply pointing to things like self-identified age: a type of data they know to be inaccurate and, in fact, do not even rely on themselves when it comes to product development and targeted advertising. The only way to keep our children safe online is to hold these companies accountable if they *reasonably should have known* a user is a minor. Title II, Section 201 also gives a pass to any platform that finds a way to monetize users without requiring creation of a username— as Google does for millions of children currently and deliberately. This is not protection.

Title II, Section 213 does not provide for reasonable and meaningful obligations, it simply requires these companies to create policies, practices, and procedures – something they claim to do already. This not only strips the stronger bipartisan duty of care but flips that duty on its head and in a manner that Big Tech can use to argue a conflict with existing state laws. Our children and families do not need more promises from Big Tech. We need safety by design. We need real duties and real action by our lawmakers.

Title II, Section 221 of the bill contains preemption language that would wipe out state laws and regulations that are far more protective of kids and teens than this version of KOSA as well as threaten the ability of state Attorneys General, school districts, and families like ours to pursue justice against Big Tech for the unimaginable harm they have brought to our families and communities. The preemption language in this, combined with letting tech companies write their own rules and watered down obligations throughout, guarantees that tech companies will only be asked to follow the weakest policies that the companies themselves write, and any attempt to hold them to a higher standard of safety and transparency will be derailed by this bill and the procedural advantages these companies already have due to their resources and control of critical data.

Last summer, certain lawmakers attempted to enact preemption provisions at the behest of the tech industry in the field of AI. The American public forcefully responded, making clear that preemption for an industry that has profited from design-based based harms for more than a decade is not acceptable. Families and advocates joined forces and mobilized to prevent such preemption then, and we are prepared to do so again now.

In addition to all of these issues on the bill's face, we ask that our lawmakers consider the fact that countless tech industry documents have recently begun to be unsealed because, and only because, of the lawsuits families like, and including, ours were able to file – lawsuits that would be in jeopardy under this omnibus bill. This includes company documents admitting to addiction by design, to mental health harms like anxiety, depression, and body dysmorphia being caused by their design decisions (harms these companies admitted to internal, but lied about to the American public), and a myriad of other issues that are directly relevant to what our laws must address. Because this makes no rational sense, it is left to our imaginations to ponder the motivation behind the House's inclination to pass a weak and ineffective version of KOSA now, as those truths finally are being released into the public record and just weeks before the first of many verdicts to come in litigation already pending against Big Tech.

As such, we strongly urge you to oppose this bill and to act on the bipartisan version of KOSA that is pending in the Senate, and that has the support of countless parents and organizations. Or to hold and wait until you have the information needed to make informed choices, rather than tech-informed choices. Legislating isn't easy. We understand this. But progress takes strength and courage, and we are asking you to find that strength and courage. We are asking you to stand up to the powerful interests in the tech industry and to stand with America's parents and children instead. We will always stand up for children, and we ask you to do the same and oppose this omnibus bill.

Sincerely,

Karen G., mother to plaintiff K.G.M.

Megan Garcia, Florida, on behalf of Sewell Setzer III, Forever 15

Cynthia Montoya, Colorado, on behalf of Juliana Peralta, Forever 13

Alicia Shamblin, Nevada, on behalf of Zane Shamblin, Forever 23

Kristin Bride, Arizona, on behalf of Carson, Forever 16

Amy Neville, Arizona, on behalf of Alexander, Forever 14

Julianna Arnold, California, on behalf of Coco, Forever 17

Jennie DeSerio, Arkansas, on behalf of Mason Edens, Forever 16

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Avery Schott, Colorado, on behalf of Anna Schott, Forever 18

Bridgette Norring, Minnesota, on behalf of Devin Norring, Forever 19

Erin Popolo, New Jersey, on behalf of Emily Murillo, Forever 17

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Brandy, Louisiana, on behalf of Englyn, Forever 14

Mary Rodee, New York, on behalf of Riley Basford, Forever 15

Aaron Ping, Washington, on behalf of Avery, Forever 16

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Kathy Klingele, California, on behalf of Sequoyah, Forever 16

Matt Capelouto, California, on behalf of Alexandra Capelouto, Forever 20

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James Ebert, Kansas, on behalf of Jayson Patrick, Forever 21

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Marion Matthes, Florida, on behalf of Gregory Sidon, Forever 23
Amy Shearer, Maine, on behalf of Julia Shearer, Forever 18
Maggie Taylor, Illinois, on behalf of Emily Taylor, Forever 17
Patti Klose, Colorado, on behalf of Lauren Lujan, Forever 18
Chris Didier, California, on behalf of Zach Didier, Forever 17
S.M., Washington, on behalf of Taylen Aniahs Dorsey, Forever 15
Dani, Washington, on behalf of Alexander, Forever 18
Stephani McPherson O'Neil, South Carolina, on behalf of Mac O'Neil, Forever 24
Ramel Lindsay, Colorado, on behalf of Jordan Lindsay, Forever 27
Claire Hargreaves, Virginia, on behalf of John, Forever 20
Krislynn Wells, Texas, on behalf of Chandler Wells, Forever 18
Dale Pizzo, New York, on behalf of Albert Pizzo, Forever 21
Jason, Outside of U.S., on behalf of Penelope Sokolowski, Forever 17
Renee, New Jersey, on behalf of Bryan, Forever 15
Regina Leah Chavez, California, on behalf of Jewels Marie Wolf, Forever 15
Graciela Baez, California, on behalf of Arnold Ceballos, Forever 17
S.R., Outside of U.S., on behalf of A.R., Forever 18
Amber Royer, California, on behalf of Richard Royer, Forever 18
Karletha Gilliam, Iowa, on behalf of Ciara Gilliam, Forever 22
Bobby Yay Yay Jones, Nevada, on behalf of Bobby Levi Jones, Forever 13
Jaime Puerta, California, on behalf of Daniel Joseph Puerta-Johnson, Forever 16
Hollie Dance, Outside of U.S., on behalf of Archie Battersbee, Forever 12
Brian Carlson, Vermont, on behalf of Estherline Carlson, Forever 20
Philip de Melo, Maryland, on behalf of George Carrion, Forever 13
Kelly Cloer, North Carolina, on behalf of Landon, Forever 21
Sylvia Guerra, Texas, on behalf of Mianemi Lidia Lozano, Forever 11
Janet Majewski, Georgia, on behalf of Emily Grace Zavala, Forever 14
Krista DeGroat, Georgia, on behalf of Paris Smith, Forever 13
Kathryn Williams, Indiana, on behalf of Chantel, Forever 18
Lisa Marquez, California, on behalf of Fernando Sanchez, Forever 17
Bre Everdeen, California, on behalf of Sadie, Forever 15
Rosalba Scaravilli, New Jersey, on behalf of Salvatore Scaravilli Jr, Forever 28
Vaishali Honawar, Maryland, on behalf of Jay Thirunarayanapuram, Forever 15
Desikan Thirunarayanapuram, Maryland, on behalf of Jay Thirunarayanapuram, Forever 15
Kristina Cahak, Wisconsin, on behalf of Morgan Danielle Pieper, Forever 15
A.L.F., Illinois, on behalf of Sarah, Forever 20
Tammy Rodriguez, Connecticut, on behalf of Selena Rodriguez, Forever 11
April Parks, Ohio, on behalf of George O'Brien, Forever 13
William, Minnesota, on behalf of Jacob, Forever 20
Allison Steenberg, Minnesota, on behalf of Delilah Steenberg, Forever 12
Donna Peele, Washington, on behalf of Dakota Elijah Blue Cecil, Forever 17
Kimberly Whitley, Arkansas, on behalf of Cadence Soto, Forever 14

L.P., California, on behalf of Sadie Raine Hershman, Forever 15
Dave, Illinois, on behalf of Sarah, Forever 20
Heriberto Arroyo Roman, Wisconsin, on behalf of Arriani Jaileen Arroyo, Forever 9
John, Maryland, on behalf of Sadie Richick, Forever 15
Angela Moore, Arkansas, on behalf of Memphis Brown, Forever 21
Cindy Sarantos, California, on behalf of Dylan Kai Sarantos, Forever 18
Beverly Garland, Georgia, on behalf of Breezy Snow Carter, Forever 12
Victoria Hinks, California, on behalf of Alexandra "Owl" Hinks, Forever 16
Ch Burke, Outside of U.S., on behalf of Harry Burke, Forever 17
Carrie Baeten, Wisconsin, on behalf of Jack McDonough, Forever 18
Shawane Miller, Texas, on behalf of Leon Miller, Forever 16
Kate Boehmer, Colorado, on behalf of Logan Boehmer, Forever 17
Katherine Townsend, Iowa, on behalf of Saniah Mickle, Forever 16
Patricia Hawkins Bodine, Illinois, on behalf of Joshua James Hawkins, Forever 17
Tim & Tamia Woods, Ohio, on behalf of James Woods, Forever 17
Charay Gadd, Michigan, on behalf of London Izabella-Ryén Gadd, Forever 12
Mona Leonardi, California, on behalf of Michael Leonardi, Forever 20
Shannon Rickson, New Jersey, on behalf of Madison Torres, Forever 20
Laura Lynch, Washington, on behalf of Brillion, Forever 18
L.D., California, on behalf of Hayden D., Forever 17
April Peltier, Montana, on behalf of Melissa Buckles, Forever 17
Valerie Bradley, California, on behalf of Hector Gonzalez, Forever 20
Karl Obray, Utah, on behalf of Dexton Hutchings (Obray), Forever 14
Katherine Jeremias, California, on behalf of Cedar Jeremias-Sgouros, Forever 18
Dorothy, California, on behalf of Mars, Forever 16
Mikayla, California, on behalf of Eli Ott, Forever 15
Monica Ortiz, California, on behalf of Fidel Joel Marin Jr., Forever 16
T.H., North Carolina, on behalf of Dawson Holden, Forever 18
Ellen Roome, Outside of U.S., on behalf of Jools Sweeney, Forever 14
C.B., North Carolina, on behalf of Alexis Bolinger, Forever 15
Taj Jensen, Washington, on behalf of Tanner Jensen, Forever 19
Jennifer Markus, Ohio, on behalf of Braden, Forever 15
Julie B., Kentucky, on behalf of Faith, Forever 20
Roxanne Stevenson, Iowa, on behalf of Evelyn Stevenson, Forever 16
Vanessa Ayala, Arizona, on behalf of Noah, Forever 17
A.H., Tennessee, on behalf of DeMonte' Hibler, Forever 19
Nacole Kalish Ward, Wisconsin, on behalf of Chance Ruetten, Forever 19
Darla Caskey Gill, Louisiana, on behalf of Emma Claire Gill, Forever 16
Shelly Sample, Pennsylvania, on behalf of Noah Spangler, Forever 24
Joshua Soto, Arkansas, on behalf of Cadence Soto, Forever 14
Stuart Stephens, Outside of U.S., on behalf of Oliver Lucas Stephens, Forever 13
Don Sample, Pennsylvania, on behalf of Noah Spangler, Forever 24
Rivette Marchand, North Carolina, on behalf of Zen Bee Marchand-Hill, Forever 15
Olusesi, Colorado, on behalf of Moses Malik Majekodunmi, Forever 19
D.M., California
Altalena Martucci, Florida

Jennifer, Kentucky
C.H., Missouri
Jasmine Mitchell-Chataigne, Florida
E.J.P., North Carolina
Carmen Melendez, New Jersey
Heather Goss, Michigan
K.J., California
A.L., California
Michelle Chase, Massachusetts
Jessica Parsons, California
Natasha Fumasoli, New York
Greg Cappello, New Jersey
Carrie Blaylock, Virginia
Lisa, New York
Rachel Boothe, Montana
Jennifer, Oregon
T.D., Texas
Naomi, Arizona
Valena, Arizona
Sharon, Maryland
Sheree C. Cox, Pennsylvania
Ryan B., Missouri
Zachary C., Arizona
Candace Wuest, Kentucky
S. Farrell, Texas
Q., Georgia
Diane Stuart, Washington
Pricilla Cooper, California
Ashley Smith, Florida
Parris Avila, California
Yvonne Taylor, Oklahoma
Alan Underwood, Nevada
Kim Panting, New York
Sarah Massey, Georgia
Bichloan, Nevada
A.W., Ohio
V.V., California
R.G., California
Bridgette Downey, Kentucky
Ronald Tse, California
T.A., Ohio
Alena Bailey, West Virginia
Deana Loudon, California
Tawanna Williams, Georgia
Ruth Robinson, Ohio
Ronette Hill, Pennsylvania

Chiquita, Mississippi
James Lowe, Florida
Deanna Rios, California
Lisa Mays, Florida
Kelly Clark, Washington
R.B., Florida
J.A.P., Kansas
V.D.M., California
W.C., Oklahoma
Alexandra B., North Carolina
D.E., Florida
L.B., Georgia
Arielle, California
Marlynn Depena, Florida
Darla Catlin, Oklahoma
Sabrina, New Hampshire
Wendy Reed, Texas
L.R., New York
Jeff Allen, Pennsylvania
J.M., California
Jeff, Georgia
T.C., Kentucky
Tina, New Jersey
Kristie Bell, New Jersey
K.B., Wisconsin
Tamia, California
Tyesha Sims, California
M.M., California
Louis, Pennsylvania
Kristina N., Minnesota
S.B., Alabama
Marni Greening, Utah
Leonor Pardo De Figueroa, New York
Chandalyn, Missouri
Shannon Byron, Oregon
R.D., New York
Dawn Marie Daniels, Colorado
Alice, North Carolina
Lori Bullard, California
L.K.R. and C.B.R., Minnesota
Nancy Lendall, California
D.H., Georgia
G.M., California
Jennifer Frankland, Vermont
A.C., Indiana
A.K., California

Y.S.C., Florida
Vanessa Goodwin, New York
Myra Sosa, Louisiana
Ashley Yount, Idaho
Shaheen, California
C.W., Texas
Amber L., Oklahoma
Shama Reed, Minnesota
Mary, Maine
R.O., California
Rebecca M. Aaron, Oklahoma
J.B., California
S.F., Texas
O.L., Illinois
Naika S. Williams, Massachusetts
Dema Abu Alia, Washington
A.G., Virginia
Ginger Nickles, Oregon
D.F., Minnesota
M.N.B, Nebraska
Monique M., Arizona
Carolyn Hutchins, Missouri
M.B., New York
Pamela Binion, Texas
M.B., Florida
Shay F., Georgia
M.K., California
Monica, Arizona
Danielle Guard, Ohio
Heather S., North Carolina
Angel Whalen, Arkansas
Ashlee, California
Stephanie Valliere, Massachusetts
S.C., California
Beatriz Rajacic, New York
Kaylee Nickles, Oregon
Maureen, Illinois
Tanisha, California
M.M., Arkansas
Orion, Massachusetts
J.K., Illinois
Mandi Truman, Oklahoma
Halima, California
Melissa Kashanchi, Texas
J.B., Wisconsin
Kristy Brown, Wisconsin

Brenda Sandoval, California
John Workman, Ohio
Maria Davies, Florida
Mindy B., Arizona
Ty-Shamika Fleming, Louisiana
Sharon, Nevada
Tara, Ohio
Cynthia, Maryland
Yvonne, Oregon
M.I.G., California
Kristen, Illinois
C.A.L., Georgia
Cassius Bernstine, California
Mea Inglehart, Georgia
K.G., Texas
Tanya, Illinois
GabriElla Nguyen, Washington
Melissa, California
Rachel M., Missouri
A.P., Arizona
Marjorie Heitkamp, Indiana
Elle Alexsi, Washington
Shana Bennett, Georgia
A.R., Vermont
Elaine Jones, Florida
Alma Wilson, North Carolina
Lacie, Illinois
L.P., Pennsylvania
D.S., Texas
Jeanette Aivazian, Arizona
Delfina Gonzales, California
Tabitha Carter, Texas
Aliceia, Pennsylvania
V.J.F., Nevada
John Sarier, Colorado
Jessie, California
T.H., California
Amanda Gould, South Carolina
Ericka Jones, Tennessee
S.R., New York
Judy Sandoval, Texas
Amy, Virginia
Laurie Wright, Tennessee
Jen, Oregon
Nicole Ryan, Arizona
Pamela Moses, Tennessee

R.P., California
Shannon Rizzo, Michigan
N.P., California
T.H., Florida
Carol A. Depinto, New Jersey
Jason Osterson, Guam
S.K., California
Emily Bell, Washington
Stacy V., New Hampshire
Andrea, New York
M.A., California
Marie Sheva, Rhode Island
Brittney Doffing, Oregon
A.G., Virginia
Suzie, Arizona
Gwendolyn, Massachusetts
Marlena Thomas, Wisconsin
Christina, Ohio
Christina Giannoni, Florida
Lisa & Stephen Reynolds, Massachusetts
Eunisha, Missouri
Stacie Cooper, Iowa
Candace Hunter, California
Kamille Gray, Illinois
Rima Carlson, Vermont
Katlyn Agostinelli, New Jersey
Michael Steadman, Pennsylvania
P.M., Wisconsin
Luisa Thomas, Massachusetts
Krystal Biser-Rutter, Florida
J.N., Oregon
I.C., Pennsylvania
Maria H., California
J.S., Alabama
Rebecca Wadsworth, Arizona
P.T., Pennsylvania
Walter Galligani, Illinois
Dr. Curtis Hayslip, Georgia
Sony Gutierrez, West Virginia
Tiffany Blaska, Michigan
Shirley Pelage, New York
Kibia Ames, Texas
Tiffany Key, Tennessee
L.K.W., California
Courtney R., Illinois
Ida Acevedo, Florida

Angela Hernandez, Washington
Georgina, Maryland
M.L.G., Texas
Linda K., California
Danielle, Ohio
Tucker, Pennsylvania
Elizabeth Farr, Georgia
Jasmine Miranda, Florida
Dawn Daniels, Colorado
Sheryl Staggs, California
E.C., California
Mahogany Foster, Texas
Lakisha Turner, Michigan
T.E., Georgia
Carolin, California
Mary Powers, Washington
Christy, Tennessee
Garcia Nayeli, California
Karen Hoffpauir, Iowa
S.M., North Carolina
Lauren, Texas
Cindy Declue, Missouri
Jeanetta, Pennsylvania
Kelly, Washington
Joseph Trojan, Pennsylvania
F.O., California
L.T., Wisconsin
Kareemah, Texas
M.F., Ohio
Julie, Wisconsin
Jackie, Tennessee
Mira, Arizona
S.L., Florida
Friday, Pennsylvania
Shashunna, Illinois
Julie Kent, Florida
Tabatha Lewthwaite (Griffin), Georgia
Theresa Wilkerson, California
Amy, Mississippi
Rachel Thomas Steadman, Pennsylvania
Angela Harris, North Carolina
Shannon De La Torre, Arizona
Tracy, New Jersey
Piedad Crouch, New Mexico
Rina Brown, California
Lorien Johnson, Nevada

B.K., Washington
L.M., Georgia
Chris Oliver, Illinois
C.B., Missouri
Amy Rossi-Espagnet, Georgia
M.L., California
Marie Cossey, Oregon
Shirita Gibbs, Alabama
Anita Gill, Missouri
Stacey, Florida
L.R., Missouri
L.J., New York
Elena Galvez, California
Geneé Stites-Woodson, California
Ed Burke, Florida
J.M., Florida
Tiffany, Virginia
Shaunetta Matlock, Georgia
K.J., Washington
Eva Dixon, Pennsylvania
K.D., New York
N.C., Hawaii
Kimberly, Illinois
Meghan, Nevada
Cynthia, California
Virginia Beach, California
Andrea M. Dutra, California
Shauna F. Cain, Tennessee
Hillary Soto, Nevada
C.C., California
Erica, Indiana
Lynne Bolt, South Carolina
Leslie, Nevada
R.S., Alabama
Desirae Hernandez, Texas
Robert Parsons, California
A.C., South Carolina
Holly DeLorenzo, New Jersey
Frances Rivas, Texas
N.A.M., Michigan
L.T., Illinois
Holly, Kentucky
K.T., Nevada
Jackie, Texas
Christina, Nevada
Maria Allred, California

Shaun Micheel, Tennessee
Candace, Maryland
Ashley, Michigan
Irene Vogel song, North Carolina
Judith Santillan, California
Adrian Bishop, Massachusetts
A.B., Pennsylvania
M.S., Maryland
K.C., Texas
Rhianna, Minnesota
Taren Williams, California
Michelle Chappell, Colorado
J.M., Indiana
Erika M., California
Virginia Dickinson, California
B.B., Michigan
Marnie Lyles, California
Liberty Graves, Washington
H.B., Texas
D.D., Colorado
Jerry, Texas
Julianne, Nevada
Donald, Arizona
Rechelle Casto, Michigan
Emily Earle, Outside of U.S.
T.S.M., Ohio
J.F., Delaware
Jenez, Arizona
Stephanie D., Utah
Michelle Hoyle, Illinois
Julie C., New York
Kim, California
Tammy VanSickle, Michigan
Tom, Washington
E.P., Florida
Melissa A. Turner, California
Candace P. Allen, Tennessee
N.J., Arkansas
Cathy Vanderford, Nevada
Shane A. Lynde, Michigan
Vanessa Quinones, New York
F.A.S., Massachusetts
C.R., North Dakota
Kathryn DeMarco, Michigan
Anthony Busciglio, California
D.P., Nebraska

T.M., Georgia
Juan Grijalva, New Jersey
Juan Grijalva, New Jersey
Mollee Fitch, Texas
Kathy Gonzalez, New York
Lisa Stewart, Louisiana
Sabrina Gidron, South Carolina
Carlos Gidron, Sr., South Carolina
Rachel Leigh Tomlin, California
Damany Browne, New York
J.M., Texas
Remus Preda, New York
Sandra Luban, California
Hope Dowaliby, Michigan