

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 3, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Majority Leader
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Scalise:

We write today to state our support for protecting American children from the harms caused by social media and other online platforms. While the internet and digital tools have helped kids connect with others and the world around them, these benefits have come at a profound cost—our children are experiencing emotional, mental, and physical harm from their use of digital platforms.

These are not isolated harms. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, the use of social media among American youth is pervasive, with up to 95 percent of kids aged 13-17 reporting that they use social media, and more than one-third of them use it constantly. Nearly 40 percent of kids aged 8-12 use social media, even though most platforms purportedly do not allow children under 13 to create an account.

Studies show the more time youth spend on social media, the greater the risk they will suffer from poor mental health, disordered eating, and diminished sleep quality. The use of targeted advertising results in kids being shown ads for alcohol, tobacco, diet pills, or gambling sites. These risks are multiplied because social media platforms are designed to be addictive, so that kids will spend more time online.

Federal law protecting children's privacy has not kept up with technology. Further, current law does not protect the online privacy of teens aged 13-16.

The "Kids Online Safety and Privacy Act" ("KOSPA") will give parents and kids more tools to avoid harm. And the law will provide a long overdue update to the current Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. The Senate passed KOSPA by an overwhelming, bipartisan vote of 91-3. KOSPA proves that Congress can set aside politics and act decisively when our children are at stake.

We ask that you join the 91 United States Senators who put the well-being of our children ahead of tech companies and bring KOSPA to the House floor for a vote.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator
Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation



Ted Cruz
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator

cc: Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Representative Frank Pallone