KIDS INTERNET AND DIGITAL SAFETY (KIDS) INITIATIVE
SOLUTIONS TO KEEP CHILDREN AND TEENS SAFE ONLINE

The Problems:

- Half of teens say they are online constantly, double the share of teens in 2014-2015.
- Heavy social media users are more likely to be bullied, feel sad, and report suicide risk.
- Heavy screen use leads to poor sleep, and social media use causes body image issues.
- Parents overwhelmingly want companies and policymakers to do more to protect kids.
- Exposure to pornography generally starts at age 12; use is linked to adverse outcomes.
- Internet platforms facilitate alcohol, fentanyl, and tobacco use by minors.
- Nearly three-quarters of video game players aged 10-17 experience harassment online.
- States have enacted numerous kids' online safety laws; most have been blocked in court.

Key Themes:

- We're advancing a broad suite of reforms—because no single solution can protect kids online.
- Any bill we move must pass constitutional muster. Content-based restrictions violate the First Amendment and fail to protect a single kid because they are struck down in court.
- We're tackling online safety issues for kids in emerging industries such as social gaming and AI chatbots.
- We're holding Big Tech accountable through strong federal and state enforcement.
- We're establishing a robust national standard for kids' internet and digital safety that empowers parents and addresses the emerging state-by-state patchwork of laws.

Our Solutions:

Safety by Default: Platforms should maximize protections for children and teens by default.

- Require platforms to put safeguards in place to address harms to minors, including for obscene content, financial scams, alcohol, tobacco, narcotic drugs, and gambling.
- Limit design features that result in compulsive usage.
- Ensure that online safeguards for kids are turned on by default.
- Prohibit platforms from facilitating the advertisement of illegal products to kids.
- Prohibit platforms from defaulting to personalized, algorithm-driven feeds for minors.

Empowering Parents: Parents have a right to oversee their children and teens' online experience and must be empowered with easy-to-use tools and controls.

- Require easily accessible parental controls and tools.
- Ensure parental control over minors' app downloads, in-app purchases, and in-platform communications.

- Provide a centralized interface for parents to manage tools and permissions, to make using the tools and providing parental consent as easy as possible.
- Provide new third-party oversight and transparency tools for parents.
- Identify national best practices to ensure the effectiveness of parental controls.

Protect Kids Privacy: Children and teens deserve robust privacy and data security protections fit for the modern internet.

- Extend COPPA 1.0 protections to teens.
- Ban targeted advertising to children and teens.
- Prohibit market and product research on children.
- Guarantee privacy settings are the most protective by default.

Promote Age Verification and Age Assurance: Age verification and age assurance are needed to support enforceable protections for children and teens.

- Mandate age verification to access pornography.
- Require age verification for app store downloads and purchases.
- Create best practices for age assurance and verification.
- Ensure privacy and data security protections are in place for use of age verification.
- No requirements to hand over government-issued identifications.

Hold Big Tech and Internet Platforms Accountable: Robust enforcement and oversight are critical to hold online platforms accountable.

- Authorize Federal Trade Commission first-fine civil penalties against violators.
- Enable State Attorneys General enforcement of federal standards.
- Require platforms to undergo annual third-party audits to assess kids' online safety.
- Require platforms to have a reporting mechanism on harms to minors.

Address Emerging Risks and Technologies: Digital technologies, including AI, are continuously evolving and can pose new risks to kids.

- Address risks posed by AI chatbots by providing minors access to mental health resources, banning deceptive professional advice, and mandating safeguards for obscene and unlawful material for minors.
- Ensure minors can communicate safely and give parents safeguards to activate for their kids on social gaming platforms.
- Put in place new restrictions on disappearing messages.

Facilitate Educational Campaigns and Research: Policymakers must be equipped to address novel challenges, and parents must have the know-how to promote a safer internet for kids.

- Establish nationwide education campaigns on minors' internet use and AI chatbots specifically.
- Conduct research on social media and fentanyl, effectiveness of parental controls and tools, chatbots, and minors use of social media.