

Kids Online Safety Act – **SUPPORT**

Legislation to impose responsibility on online platforms and give minors and parents new tools

[S 1409](#), co-authored by Sens. Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Blackburn (R-Tenn.), as revised on February 16, 2024

What does the Kids Online Safety Act do?

KOSA requires companies to design their platforms to prioritize children and teens' health and well-being over engagement and profits. Covered platforms would have a 'duty of care' to prevent or mitigate harms posed by the platform and offer parents and minors safeguards and tools, like strong default privacy settings. KOSA requires greater transparency about how online platforms operate. The Senate Commerce Committee unanimously approved the bill last July, and changes to the bill were announced in February. More than 60 senators support the bill.

What does KOSA NOT do? KOSA does NOT

require companies to take down or block specific content, and nothing in the act prevents young people from searching for content they are interested in. **KOSA does NOT** prevent young people from communicating with friends. **KOSA does NOT** allow state Attorneys General to enforce prevention of or define harms to minors.

Why do we need KOSA? Our youth are facing a mental health crisis, and evidence shows that social media platforms contribute to it. But the U.S. has no guardrails to protect kids from tech, leaving the burden on parents alone. We need legislation to force companies to change design features that maximize engagement, often at the cost childrens' well-being. KOSA shifts the responsibility to platforms while also giving minors and parents more meaningful controls.

How does KOSA promote transparency?

Covered platforms must conduct annual independent audits that identify the risks of harm to minors.

What online harms does KOSA require social media platforms to mitigate?

- Suicide, eating disorders, substance use disorders, and sexual exploitation and abuse
- Patterns of use that indicate or encourage addiction-like behavior
- Physical violence, online bullying, or harassment of a minor
- Promotion and marketing of narcotic drugs, tobacco products, gambling, or alcohol
- Predatory, unfair, or deceptive marketing practices, or other financial harms

What safeguards and controls does KOSA

give children and parents? Platforms are required to enable the strongest privacy settings by default. Parents and teens will not have to go into the privacy settings of each of the online services and apps they use if they want to limit the amount of data that companies collect and share on them.

Minors can limit strangers from contacting them, prevent others from viewing their personal data collected by or shared on the platform, and opt out of algorithmic recommendation systems. Parents can control these specific account settings for their children under age 13, and view the settings - but not the content - for teens 13 to 16. Parents can also restrict financial transactions and track the time their child spends on a platform.

Protecting kids online requires a whole team effort - families, companies, and Congress.