

Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA 2.0)

Senators Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Bill Cassidy (R-LA),

Maria Cantwell (D-WA), and Ted Cruz (R-TX)

118th Congress

Background:

Today, the United States faces a youth mental health crisis fueled, in part, by Big Tech. The American Academy of Pediatrics has [declared](#) a national emergency for children's mental health, and the Centers for Disease Control [found](#) that in 2021, 1 in 3 high school girls contemplated suicide; 1 in 10 high school girls attempted suicide; and among LGBTQ+ youth, more than one in five attempted suicide. As the Surgeon General concluded in a [report](#) last year, "there are ample indicators that social media can also have a profound risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents."

Platforms' data practices significantly contribute to the crisis. There is a straight line from the glaring lack of privacy protections for children and teens to the decline in young people's well-being. Platforms need vast amounts of data to build detailed profiles on young people to serve them targeted ads. To feed that data machine, they must build addictive features that help drive this youth mental health crisis. The formula is simple — more addiction equals more data equals greater profits for Big Tech. In fact, according to a [recent Harvard study](#), in 2022, the major Big Tech platforms earned nearly \$11 billion in ad revenue from U.S. users under age 17.

To stop these invasive data practices, Senators Markey and Cassidy reintroduced the *Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA 2.0)*, bipartisan legislation for children and teens' privacy in the 21st Century. The bill — which unanimously passed the Senate Commerce Committee in July 2023 and is cosponsored by Commerce Committee Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz — modernizes and strengthens the only online privacy law for children, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). Congress passed COPPA in 1998 to institute basic privacy protections for users under age 13, including notice and parental consent requirements. While COPPA took major steps towards safeguarding children's personal information on the internet, the law is overdue for an update in light of major changes in the online landscape. Kids lack [key cognitive capabilities](#) to safely spend time online, yet during the COVID-19 pandemic, children's use of the internet [doubled](#), and over one in four teens report using social media "[almost constantly](#)." It's time for Congress to act.

In particular, the *Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act* would:

- Build on COPPA by prohibiting internet companies from collecting personal information from users who are **13 to 16 years old** without their consent;
- **Ban targeted advertising to children and teens;**
- Revise COPPA's "actual knowledge" standard to close the loophole that allows covered platforms to ignore kids and teens on their site;
- Create an "**Eraser Button**" by requiring companies to permit users to eliminate personal information from a child or teen when technologically feasible; and
- Establish **data minimization rules** to prohibit the excessive collection of children and teens' data.

Endorsing groups: The *Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act* has support from #HalfTheStory, AASA, The School Superintendents Association, Academy for Eating Disorders, Accountable Tech, Amanda Birkhead Nutrition Counseling LLC, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work, American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Counseling Association, American Federation of Teachers, American Heart Association, American Psychological Association, Anxiety and Depression Association of America, Association of Educational Service Agencies, Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS), Association of School Business Officials International, Banu Foundation, Be Real USA, Becca Schmill Foundation, Berkeley Media Studies Group, C. Everett Koop - Geisel School of Medicine, Center for Digital Democracy, Center for Online Safety, Centerstone, Children and Screens Institute of Digital Media and Child Development, Children Now, Citizens for Decency, Clinical Social Work Association, Common Sense Media, Compass 31, Consortium for School Networking, Consumer Action, Council of the Great City Schools, Darren White , Defending the Early Years, Design It For Us, Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, & Action, EDGE Consulting Partners, Enough Is Enough, Fairplay, IGGY Ventures, LookUp.live, Lynn's Warriors , MACGH, Media Education Foundation, Mental Health America, Mentari , National Association of School Nurses, National Alliance for Eating Disorders, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, National Association for Pupil Transportation, National Association of Social Workers, National Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Eating Disorders Association, National Education Association, National Federation of Families, National League for Nursing, National Parent Teacher Association, Network for Public Education, Parents Television and Media Council, National Parent Teacher Association, National Rural Education Association, National School Boards Association, Parents Who Fight, Paving the Way Foundation, Peace Educators Allied for a Safe Environment (P.E.A.C.E.), Porn Free Colorado, Postpartum Support International, Prevention Institute, Project HEAL, Project Stand, Protect Young Eyes, Public Good Law Center, Public Health Institute, Public Interest Privacy Center, Public Knowledge, Realized Potential Inc, Rego Payment Architectures Inc., RI International, Shift SC, Stop Predatory Gambling and Campaign for Gambling-Free Kids, Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders, Susan K. Youngsteadt LCSW, PLLC, The Kennedy Forum, The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health, truthinadvertising.org (TINA.org), Turning Life On, Tyler Clementi Foundation, U.S. PIRG, Uprising, Wager Score, Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America, We Stand Guard LLC, Wealth Management Ministries-Prevention Works Joint Task Force & Coalition, WithAll, worthy2, and YCA Human Trafficking Task Force.