

September 21, 2023

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Meeting Request to Discuss Kids Online Safety Act

Dear Senator Warren,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, **we are writing to request a conversation with you and your staff in the coming weeks to ask for your co-sponsorship of the bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act (S. 1409).** There is an urgent need for stronger protections of kids online and we believe KOSA is essential to both the young people of Massachusetts and the country.

As you know, the bipartisan legislation, now with 45 cosponsors, passed out of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation *unanimously* earlier this year. This happened after important structural changes were included following conversations with the LGBTQ+ community.

In recent years, youth across the country have faced a growing mental health crisis. Suicide has jumped to become the [second leading cause of death](#) for youth, with [one in five teens](#) considering suicide during the pandemic. Eating disorder emergency room admissions for teen girls 12- to 17-years- old [doubled](#) since 2019 along with a doubling of [depression rates](#) for teens from 2009 - 2019. While declines in youth mental health are attributable to numerous factors, the growing use of social media platforms designed in ways that increase exposure to harmful content and encourage unhealthy patterns of use have [contributed to these trends](#).

After numerous hearings and [abundant research findings](#), the evidence is clear of the potential harms social media platforms can have on the [brain development](#) and mental health of our nation's youth, including hazardous substance use, eating disorders, and self-harm.

The Kids Online Safety Act seeks to hold social media companies accountable after their repeated failures to protect children and adolescents from the practices that make their platforms more harmful. [The bill](#) establishes a duty of care for social media companies to protect minors from specific mental health harms including; anxiety, depression, eating disorders, substance use disorders, and suicidal behaviors. Additionally, the bill requires companies to go through independent, external audits, allows federal researcher access to platform data assets, and creates substantial youth and parental controls to create a safer digital environment.

As a leader in protecting children, you have the power to contribute to tackling this growing issue through support for the Kids Online Safety Act. The wellbeing of future generations depend on it.

We ask that you please take a moment to meet with key organizational leaders to further discuss the need for this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Psychological Association
Becca Schmill Foundation
Center for Digital Democracy
Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development
Common Sense Media
Eating Disorders Coalition
Fairplay
Mental Health America
Tech Oversight Project