



21 March 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) - S.1409**

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Leader McConnell:

Consumer Reports supports [S.1409](#) and applauds the bipartisan group of 65 Senators working together to help ensure a safer online ecosystem for our children and essential tools to help both parents and kids better manage their use of online services.

**We write to urge you to pass the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) – S.1409 – this Congress.**

We are thankful to Senator Blumenthal and others for responding to feedback from Consumer Reports and other stakeholders and incorporating various changes in the bill. For example, the bill:

- includes explicit safeguards against the collection of data in addition to what is already being collected in the normal course of business for age gating or for developing an age verification functionality; and
- offers a sensible compromise and division of labor in the enforcement of KOSA by State AGs and the Federal Trade Commission.

We also welcome KOSA's strong disclosure (Section 104) and transparency (Section 105) measures for covered platforms. Requiring covered platforms to measure internally and report externally on potential harms to minors, measures taken to mitigate these harms, and how effective these measures are, are important to ensure that the safeguards for minors (Section 103) are having the intended effect.

It is urgent that we all rethink our relationship with social media technologies that are transforming our society and adversely affecting the growth and development of our children. As the Surgeon General's advisory on the effects of social media use on youth mental health explains:<sup>1</sup>

*While social media may offer some benefits, there are ample indicators that social media can also pose a risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents. Social media use by young people is nearly universal, with up to 95% of*

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<sup>1</sup> US Surgeon General's Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health, May 23, 2023. Available here: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/05/23/surgeon-general-issues-new-advisory-about-effects-social-media-use-has-youth-mental-health.html>

*young people ages 13-17 reporting using a social media platform and more than a third saying they use social media “almost constantly.”*

And further that:

*Although age 13 is commonly the required minimum age used by social media platforms in the U.S.,<sup>3</sup> nearly 40% of children ages 8–12 use social media.*

Without intervention by Congress to set ground rules like KOSA, there is no reason for companies that are profit driven with the goal of maximizing attention and engagement on their platforms to introduce adequate safeguards. As Jaron Lanier explains in his book, *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now*, the problem is not the many conveniences and technological progress that the internet has enabled. The problem lies with the business models of the few corporations that dominate online activities today.

It’s time for Congress to act and give parents and children the tools they need to better manage their use of online platforms. We urge you to pass the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA).

Kind regards,

Sumit Sharma  
Senior Researcher, Consumer Reports

**cc: Members of the United States Senate**