



American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

CENTER FOR
DIGITAL
DEMOCRACY



fairplay
childhood beyond brands

June 23, 2025

Dear Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee,

Today we write as a coalition of advocates dedicated to the mental and physical health, privacy, safety, and education of our nation's youth, urging you to advance the Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act (S. 836), also known as COPPA 2.0. The children's data privacy protection law is long outdated. Now, with new and even more powerful technologies, like AI, proliferating, and unscrupulous companies collecting ever more personal information from young people, it is more imperative than ever that Congress prioritize privacy protections for children and teens by updating the decades-old Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and passing COPPA 2.0 out of your Committee.

COPPA 2.0 is an effective, widely supported, bipartisan update to its 25-year-old predecessor. And the Senate overwhelmingly approved this bill once already, by a vote of 91-3 in July 2024 as part of the Kids Online Safety and Privacy Act.

We appreciate the recent rule-making efforts of the FTC to update COPPA. However, certain updates—such as adding protections for teenagers 13 and over—can only be made by Congress, and thus COPPA 2.0 is still desperately needed. COPPA 2.0 extends privacy protections to teens, implements strong data minimization principles, bans targeted advertising to covered minors, gives families greater control over their data, and strengthens the law to ensure covered entities cannot evade enforcement. American families urgently need these protections. Big Tech's business model relies on the extraction of millions of data points on children and teens, all to rake in record profits through design features that maximize engagement and models that interpret youth's emotional states in order to make more money off of highly targeted ads.

The use of targeted advertising results in kids being shown ads for alcohol, tobacco, diet pills, and gambling sites—and there is a growing understanding that platforms use highly detailed information about young users to target them with these inappropriate ads at the moment they are feeling insecure or emotionally vulnerable; precisely the moment at which they are most susceptible.

These privacy risks and harms are multiplied because social media platforms are designed to be addictive, so that kids will spend more time online—giving companies more opportunities to take out more information about young users, so they can even better target kids and their families

with marketing messages, and target kids more often. As the former U.S. Surgeon General has advised, this misuse of young people's personal information has contributed to a startling mental health crisis among our youth, along with a myriad of online harms, including sexual exploitation, rampant cyberbullying, and eating disorders. The data-driven business model, which is being exacerbated by AI, is directly at odds with the health, safety, and privacy of our nation's children and teens, and Congress must act to put new safeguards in place.

COPPA 2.0 is a critical piece of the puzzle to protect children and teens. America's youth and families cannot wait any longer. With our utmost respect, we ask that you move COPPA 2.0 forward.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
Center for Digital Democracy
Common Sense Media
Fairplay