



PARENTS DEFENDING EDUCATION

**ACTION**

STATEMENT: PDE Action Supports Kids Online Safety Act of 2023

November 30, 2023

Children's online safety, whether they are using digital devices at home or in the classroom, has become a huge concern for parents. Polling conducted by our partner organization, Parents Defending Education, has found that an [overwhelming majority](#) of parents are worried about the influence Big Tech has over their child and more than 60 percent believe social media use is having a negative impact on their day-to-day lives. Students' data is also massively compromised on school devices with a [recent report](#) showing 96 percent of apps used in schools have data-sharing features that pose serious safety risks for students.

More must be done to keep children safe online. The bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act spearheaded by Senators Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) delivers urgent solutions that will help protect kids online, helping to put parents' concerns at ease. The legislation is designed to prevent access to harmful sites, requires social media companies to enable strong security settings for children, and empowers parents to have more control over the content their children have access to. PDE Action applauds the bipartisan work that has enabled this timely legislation and urge its swift passage.

*Summary of the [Kids Online Safety Act](#) provided by the Senators' office:*

- Requires social media platforms provide minors with options to protect their information, disable addictive product features, and opt out of algorithmic recommendations. Platforms would be required to enable the strongest settings by default.
- Gives parents new controls to help support their children and identify harmful behaviors. Provides parents and children with a dedicated channel to report harms to kids to the platform.
- Creates a responsibility for social media platforms to prevent and mitigate harms to minors, such as promotion of suicide, eating disorders, substance abuse, sexual exploitation, and unlawful products for minors (e.g. gambling and alcohol).
- Requires social media platforms to perform an annual independent audit that assesses the risks to minors, their compliance with this legislation, and whether the platform is taking meaningful steps to prevent those harms.
- Provides academic and public interest organizations with access to critical datasets from social media platforms to foster research regarding harms to the safety and well-being of minors.