

US Senate passes first major child online safety bills in years

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US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said he was "proud" the Senate had kept its promise to parents.

The US Senate passed a sweeping social media safety package Tuesday that would force tech companies to do more to protect children—the

first major legislation targeting Silicon Valley in a generation.

Social media giants like Meta and X have been confronting a torrent of political anger for not putting in guardrails to thwart online dangers for children, including from sexual predators and teen suicide.

A rare sign of cross-party unity in an increasingly rancorous election year, the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) were passed in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote with just three dissenters.

But the bills face an uncertain path through the House of Representatives, where Republican Speaker Mike Johnson has spoken broadly in favor of the package but has not scheduled a vote.

"I'm proud to say today, the Senate keeps its promise to every parent who's lost a child because of the risks of social media... KOSA and COPPA will be perhaps the most important updates to federal laws protecting kids on the internet in decades, and it's a very good first step," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer.

The legislation was drawn up in consultation with parents of teens who had been bullied or sexually exploited but has been opposed by some free speech groups worried that it could lead to censorship.

'Duty of care'

While there is widespread agreement in a politically divided Congress on curbing the negative impacts of social media, there has never been a united path on how to go about doing so.

House members are on their summer recess and will almost certainly be focusing on averting a looming government shutdown when they return

in September.

But Schumer called on the lower chamber to pass the bills immediately on its return, urging lawmakers to "seize the opportunity to send them to the president's desk."



CEOs Jason Citron of Discord, Evan Spiegel of Snap, Shou Zi Chew of TikTok, Linda Yaccarino of X and Mark Zuckerberg of Meta are sworn in during a US Senate Judiciary Committee hearing.

The KOSA bill would establish a "duty of care" obligation on the [online platforms](#) that would demand that special provisions are in place to shield minors from toxic content.

Supported by Microsoft, X and Snap, the company that owns Snapchat, the legislation would require companies to give users a dedicated page to report harmful content—including sexual exploitation, online bullying, the promotion of suicide and eating disorders.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg gave a public apology to the families of victims at the Senate Judiciary Committee in January as hostile lawmakers grilled tech CEOs over the dangers that children face on social media.

"I'm sorry for everything you have all been through," he said. "No one should go through the things that your families have suffered."

Censorship fears

Seven LGBTQ advocacy groups withdrew initial opposition based on updates to the bill they said mitigated concerns that teens would be limited in accessing information about gender identity, sexuality and reproductive health.

But free speech groups including the American Civil Liberties Union have argued that the definition of harm is too broad and that it could lead to censorship.

COPPA would beef up privacy standards for Americans aged under 17, and outlaw advertising targeted at children and teens—requiring companies to allow users to delete personal information.

"Too many kids experience relentless promotion of suicide or substance abuse material. Too many kids have their personal data collected and then used nefariously," Schumer said.

"With studies showing that kids today spend more time on [social media](#)

than ever before, now is the moment to pass KOSA, pass COPPA, and instill guardrails that protect kids from these risks."

But Oregon Democrat Ron Wyden posted on X that the tweaks to KOSA "remain insufficient" and voiced fears that a hard-right future Republican administration could "still use this bill to pressure companies to censor gay, trans and reproductive health information."

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