

## **U.S. Sen. Blackburn Announces Growing Conservative Momentum for the Kids Online Safety Act**

WASHINGTON, D.C. September 12, 2024 – U.S. Senator Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) recently announced new conservative endorsements for the bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act she authored with Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) to provide young people and parents with the tools, safeguards, and transparency they need to protect against online harms. This legislation is the first major reform to the tech industry since 1998 and passed the Senate with 91 Senators voting in favor of it.

Children face an endless list of online threats, including sexual exploitation, drug trafficking, and the promotion of suicide, eating disorders, and illegal products. The Kids Online Safety Act has garnered support from a strong coalition of conservative stakeholders who are calling on the House of Representatives to quickly take up and pass this legislation before the end of the year.

### **NEW ENDORSEMENTS**

Kellyanne Conway: “Increasingly, children are vulnerable to online distortion and exploitation due to social media use. Social media can be a force for good, but also lurking there are traffickers, drug dealers and other bad actors. The Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) would begin to implement concrete measures that ensure our children are protected online and parents are given more control over what their children are viewing. I commend Sen. Marsha Blackburn’s persistent dedication and leadership on KOSA. For the well-being of our children, the health of our nation, and the security of our future, Congress must act now.” – Kellyanne Conway, Chair, Center for the American Child, America First Policy Institute (AFPI), Former Senior Counselor to President Donald J. Trump

Mercedes Schlapp: “Big Tech must be held accountable for refusing to protect children from online harms. When children are online, they are vulnerable to traffickers, child predators, and drug dealers who want to manipulate and harm them. It’s past time for social media platforms to prioritize the safety of children by adding stronger privacy settings and preventing the promotion of harmful content to minors. Keeping children safe is paramount, and I commend Senator Blackburn for standing up against Big Tech and for conservative values.” – Mercedes Schlapp, Former White House Director of Strategic Communications under the Trump Administration

Morgan Ortagus: “The Kids Online Safety Act is a critical step for protecting those who depend on us most for protection—our children. By requiring social media platforms to enable strong private settings by default, our minors will be better defended against the exploitation attempts visible every day on these platforms. As a mother, I am so grateful to Senator Blackburn for standing up for our children and being a leader in this fight.” – Morgan Ortagus, Former U.S. Department of State Spokesperson under the Trump Administration

Mike Huckabee: “I’m delighted to support the heroic efforts that [Senator Blackburn] and Senator Blumenthal are leading in a bi-partisan plan to pass the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA). Protecting

America's children is not a political issue, but a public safety concern that transcends the normal horizontal political spectrum of left/right. This is a vertical issue of up and down and KOSA is straight UP for families who are struggling to protect their children from the 'Wild West' of online dangers. Those who legitimately have concerns of censorship should realize KOSA does not threaten the First Amendment, but it helps protect children from the very real threat of exploitation, trafficking, and abuse." – Mike Huckabee, Former Governor of Arkansas

Jonathan Skrmetti: "I appreciate Senator Blackburn's leadership on this bipartisan effort to protect kids from the worst effects of social media. Algorithmic social media platforms have devastated teen mental health. I'm proud that Senator Blackburn places such a high priority on kids' online safety." – Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti

Lynn Fitch: "Social media platforms promise connectivity, but not without consequences. These platforms pose a serious risk to our children and their futures depend on our willingness to protect them in this digital era. It is past time the federal government updated the rules to help parents protect their children from the mental and physical effects of this epidemic. I am proud to support Senator Blackburn's Kids Online Safety Act to ensure our children receive the protection they desperately need and deserve." – Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch

Harmeet Dhillon: "Americans have all seen the threat posed by Big Tech companies. I've represented clients against big tech companies including Google who fired them for expressing conservative views. I've said before that I'm surprised we haven't seen Washington do more to rein in Big Tech's excesses, so I'm glad that lawmakers such as Senator Blackburn are stepping up to do so. The Kids Online Safety Act will put rules into place to prevent these platforms from exploiting vulnerable kids and will give families a remedy against the CEOs who offer false apologies but enable these practices for profit and ideological reasons. To be clear: this is not about so-called 'misinformation,' although we know tech uses Section 230 as a mechanism to freely censor content that falls outside of their version of the truth. KOSA will address the other side of the coin, tech companies' effective immunity against real harms caused by publishing others' content, including sex trafficking of children, drug sales to minors, and kids committing suicide. I commend the Senate for passing this much-needed legislation and look forward to seeing the House pass it soon." – Harmeet K. Dhillon, Founder and Managing Partner of Dhillon Law Group Inc.

Josh Hammer: "I commend Senator Blackburn and Congressman Bilirakis for their work on the Kids Online Safety Act. At a time where family values are consistently under attack, this legislation takes the right steps to help parents fight back against Big Tech's exploitation of our children. We know that internet platforms are targeting kids for everything from the solicitation of sex to fentanyl trafficking courtesy of China and the Mexican cartels. Don't buy Big Tech's claims to the contrary – it's time Congress stepped in to regulate Big Tech for the sake of American families." – Josh Hammer, Senior Editor-at-Large for Newsweek and Host of The Josh Hammer Show

John Yoo: "The Kids Online Safety Act is a critical step forward in the fight to protect our children online. It empowers families with the tools that they need to remain safe online. It holds platforms accountable by creating a targeted duty of care to prevent and mitigate risks to children. The Act falls squarely within the First Amendment, which recognizes the government's compelling interest in preventing the sexual exploitation of children and protecting their physical and emotional well-being. That compelling interest, and the Act's narrowly tailored means, will outweigh any free speech claims from the Big Tech platforms. This bill is not about censorship or content, but about the dangerous features that tech companies have

pushed towards America’s children.” – Professor John Yoo, Emanuel Heller Professor of Law at the University of California at Berkeley and Former Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel

Paula White-Cain: “As a Pastor and a parent, I affirm that supporting the Kids Online Safety Act is a pro-life value because it protects the dignity and well-being of our children from the relentless exploitation by Big Tech. Senators Blackburn and Blumenthal’s bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act is a crucial step in defending our youth from the toxic content, addictive algorithms, and mental health risks that have become rampant online. By demanding stricter privacy settings and greater parental control, this bill stands against those who seek to profit from the vulnerability of our children. We must champion this cause to safeguard the future of our next generation. That is why the National Faith Advisory Board supports the Kids Online Safety Act and urges people of faith, parents and anyone who wants to protect children to voice their support too.” – Pastor Paula White-Cain, President and Founder of the National Faith Advisory Board and Spiritual Advisor to President Donald J. Trump

#### CONSERVATIVE LEADERS SUPPORT PROTECTING KIDS ONLINE

Richard Grenell: “The Kids Online Safety Act is pro-family and pro-America. It will help protect children from being exploited online by drug cartels, sex predators, and human traffickers. Big tech has abused conservatives for far too long. I know that big tech will continue spending millions to defeat this legislation, but my good friend [Senator] Marsha Blackburn will not back down.” – Richard Grenell, Former Acting Director of National Intelligence under the Trump Administration

Newt Gingrich: “The Senate should pass the Kids Online Safety Act. It is a vital step toward protecting children.” – Newt Gingrich, Former U.S. Speaker of the House

Sebastian Gorka: “I can’t remember the last time there was 70 plus co-sponsors for a bill in the Senate... God bless Senator Marsha Blackburn. Please follow her right now and express your support for this crucial piece of legislation.” – Sebastian Gorka, Former Deputy Assistant to President Donald J. Trump, Host of “America First with Sebastian Gorka”

America First Policy Institute: “Congrats to the U.S. Senate for passing the Kids Online Safety Act, which empowers parents to make better-informed decisions about their children’s online presence. It’s well past time to stand up for our children from predators, toxic content, exploitation, and more, and this bill would do just that!”

The Heritage Foundation: “Normally I am just an analyst here but today I am a grateful mom. The Senate passed the Kids Online Safety Act by a vote of 91-3. If it is successful in the House, this would be the first concrete piece of legislation aimed at protecting kids online in almost THREE DECADES. Big Tech will finally be held accountable for targeting younger and younger users and parents will finally have a

fighting chance against their predations.” – Kara Frederick, Director of the Heritage Foundation Tech Policy Center

Heritage Action: “It’s no secret that big tech companies prey on children’s personal data to keep them addicted to scrolling, regardless of the negative impact on kids and the dangerous content that’s far too easy for them to access. Social media has proven to lead to deteriorated mental health, bullying, harassment, and sexual exploitation. Protecting children and young adults from those threats is one of the biggest issues of our time—Heritage Action applauds Sen. Blackburn for taking up the mantle. The Kids Online Safety Act is an important, unifying bill that holds big tech accountable for their greed and protects American children from exploitation.” – Ryan Walker, Heritage Action Executive Vice President

Concerned Women for America: “The last time that Congress addressed the safety of children online was in 1998, long before the age of social media. Since then, we’ve seen catastrophic numbers of children exploited on social media platforms that have no protective guardrails. Since these companies have yet to address this issue themselves, Congress needs to act. By introducing common-sense provisions, KOSA is an important first step towards making these platforms safer for minors.” – Penny Nance, President of Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee

Parents Defending Education Action: “The bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act will help protect minors and empower parents to have more control over what their children are doing online. [Parents Defending Education Action] is proud to support it.” – Nicki Neily, Executive Director of Parents Defending Education Action

National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE): “#KOSA passing in the Senate is a monumental win for the safety of children online—it is the first time in 25 years that a federal bill on online child protection has been this close to passing! #PassKOSA #ProtectKidsOnline #BigTech.”

Ethics and Public Policy Center: “Parents have been left on their own to try to fend off a massive tech-induced health crisis among today’s tweens and teens, contending against the allure of products engineered to be maximally addictive to their kids. KOSA offers a much-needed solution to ensure parents have the ability to protect their kids online from content that hurts their development and mental health. KOSA will grant children and parents more control over children’s experiences on the platforms and what they see; and prevent tech companies from taking those choices away with the design of their automatic features or algorithms.” – Clare Morell, Head of the Technology and Human Flourishing program for the Ethics and Public Policy Center (EPPC)

The Institute for Family Studies: “Young Americans are suffering from a profound mental health crisis caused by addiction to social media. Big Tech companies have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that

they will not reform themselves, but instead, driven by profits, they will do all they can to keep unfettered access to children. The Kids Online Safety Act gives parents and young Americans more effective tools to gain control over their experiences on these platforms to make them more age-appropriate, allowing them to disable the most addictive features. It also imposes upon these Big Tech companies a 'duty of care' to ensure that they are not designing their platforms to exploit children. It is time to pass the Kids Online Safety Act. The children of America desperately need it." – Michael Toscano, Executive Director of the Institute for Family Studies

Wired Human: "The Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) makes it clear to Big Tech, that 'Childhood is Not for Sale.' With the explosion of AI-driven algorithms, Big Tech is profiting by the billions from the commodification of children online, leading to countless forms of exploitation and harm so severe that children are dying. KOSA's ability to target the harmful design mechanisms of social media platforms makes it the most reasonable form of child protection legislation I have witnessed. Tech companies that stand against KOSA, stand against America's children and families at large." – Jason Frost, LL.M, CEO of Wired Human

American Principles Project: "Some folks like to make a flawed argument that parents and only parents should be concerned with the safety and well-being of their children online — that tech companies and government should bear no responsibility. This is completely unreasonable. Screens are everywhere. Parents obviously cannot shoulder this responsibility alone. Tech platforms specifically should bear responsibility for how they are interacting with minor users and what kinds of content they are making available to them. The Kids Online Safety Act is an important bill that aims to protect kids from some of the worst aspects of the Internet, while providing parents with stronger tools to better direct their children's online experience." – Jon Schweppe, Policy Director for American Principles Project.

Digital Progress Institute: "KOSA's targeted bipartisan approach ensures that parents can protect their kids online from content that hurts their development and mental health. This is something everyone should support. Thank you, [Senator] Blackburn and [Senator] Blumenthal, for your unwavering leadership!" – Joel Thayer, President of Digital Progress Institute

Enough is Enough: "Too many children have been sacrificed online due to the misguided notion that big tech companies get a 'no responsibility/no accountability free pass' when it comes to doing their part. EIE offers its highest gratitude to all of the bi-partisan sponsors of KOSA and COPPA 2.0, our allies across America and the survivors and Gold Star parents who have supported these critical bills. Each bill puts a stake in the ground that says 'Enough Is Enough®!'. It takes all of us, working together to safeguard our children, our future. Remember, making the internet safer for children and families is a marathon, a war. Today's Senate success marks a huge victory!"

Parents Television and Media Council: “We commend the Senate for recognizing the real harms to children online and acting with urgency to ensure that tech platforms are held accountable for protecting our children.” –Melissa Henson, Vice President of the Parents Television and Media Council

Angel AI: “For far too long, we have allowed children to be exploited online by multi-billion dollar Tech Companies that designed their products to addict and monetize kids but too poorly to protect their safety. After over a decade of damage and harms to countless kids from this negligence, enough is enough. KOSA represents the beginning of our Democracy stepping up to defend our kids by setting a standard for age appropriate design of products. Now, like any other mature industry, Tech companies and social media will have liability for the harms they incur through their ongoing negligence. I applaud the many cosponsors of this Bill and look forward to the day it is passed and signed into law. A day that cannot come soon enough for the children of America.” – Tim Estes, CEO of Angel AI

Gingrich 360: “Today, the Senate passed the Kids Online Safety Act. The House should do the same when they return in September. Congress must protect America’s children.” – Callista Gingrich, CEO of Gingrich 360