



Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Senator Cantwell, Senator Wicker, Representative Pallone, and Representative McMorris Rodgers,

We write to you as grieving parents and survivors. We have lost our children to suicide in the wake of relentless cyberbullying. We have lost our children to fentanyl poisoning from drugs purchased through social media. We have lost our children to dangerous viral “challenges” that took their lives. **We have lost our children because time and time again, Big Tech chose to prioritize profits over the safety and wellbeing of young people.**

We cannot wait another day, let alone another year. Children are dying. We urge you to pass Senate Bills 2918 and 3663, the *Children and Teens’ Online Privacy Protection Act* (COPPA 2.0) and the *Kids Online Safety Act* (KOSA).

As parents raising our children in the digital age, we did everything we were supposed to. We were open with our children about the dangers they might encounter online and how to react to them, warned them against speaking to strangers on the internet, encouraged them to come to us with their worries. And still, that wasn’t enough: even an engaged parent with all the time and resources in the world doesn’t stand a chance against the profit-seeking algorithms pushing harmful content to their kids.

Big Tech’s abject failure to regulate themselves and protect the young people using their products could not come at a worse time for American children and teens. Between 2010 and 2020, the suicide death rate increased 62% for teens.¹ In 2021, global rates of depression and anxiety among young people were 25% and 20% respectively.² Rates of emergency room visits for children and teens for depression, anxiety, and other psychiatric issues rose by 28% between 2011 and 2015.³ US emergency rooms saw more teen girls admitted for eating

¹ Saunders, H., Jun 22, N. P. P., & 2022. (2022, June 22). A Look at Suicide Rates Ahead of 988 Launch—A National Three-Digit Suicide Prevention Hotline. *KFF*. <https://www.kff.org/other/issue-brief/a-look-a-suicide-rates-ahead-of-988-launch-a-national-three-digit-suicide-prevention-hotline/>

² Racine, N., McArthur, B. A., Cooke, J. E., Eirich, R., Zhu, J., & Madigan, S. (2021). Global Prevalence of Depressive and Anxiety Symptoms in Children and Adolescents During COVID-19: A Meta-analysis. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 175(11), 1142–1150. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.2482>

³ Kalb, L. G., Stapp, E. K., Ballard, E. D., Hologue, C., Keefer, A., & Riley, A. (2019). Trends in Psychiatric Emergency Department Visits Among Youth and Young Adults in the US. *Pediatrics*, 143(4), e20182192. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-2192>

disorders during the pandemic.⁴ Fatal overdoses among teens doubled between 2019 and 2020, and rose by another 20% in 2021.⁵

The mental health crisis is not happening in a vacuum: a well-established body of research (some from tech companies themselves) shows how algorithmic amplification and social media exacerbate these problems for young people. And we know from first-hand experience how digital platforms can turn the normal trials and tribulations of adolescence into incomprehensible tragedy.

Our children should not be collateral damage in tech companies' relentless push for profits. Big Tech must be held accountable for the business decisions that are taking our children's lives.

This is why COPPA 2.0 and the *Kids Online Safety Act* are so urgently needed. If passed into law, KOSA would require digital platforms to design their products with the best interests of children and teens as a primary consideration. Tech companies would have a duty of care to minors, requiring them to mitigate the impact of harmful content on their platforms.

The *Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act* would get to the heart of Big Tech's bad business model by limiting data collection for young people and banning data-driven surveillance advertising for children and opting teens out of it by default. Tech companies that turn a blind eye to the millions of kids under 13 on their platform would be held accountable for profiting from their sensitive data. And for the first time ever, teens would be granted online privacy protections.

American families need COPPA 2.0 and the *Kids Online Safety Act* now: we cannot delay any more. Every single day that social media remains unregulated, more children are lost to its harms.

Please, pass the *Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act* and the *Kids Online Safety Act* today.

Sincerely,

Tawainna Anderson
Parent to Nylah, forever age 10

Julianna Arnold
Parent to Coco, forever age 17

⁴ Radhakrishnan, L. (2022). Pediatric Emergency Department Visits Associated with Mental Health Conditions Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic—United States, January 2019–January 2022. *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 71. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7108e2>

⁵ Friedman, J., Godvin, M., Shover, C. L., Gone, J. P., Hansen, H., & Schriger, D. L. (2022). Trends in Drug Overdose Deaths Among US Adolescents, January 2010 to June 2021. *JAMA*, 327(14), 1398–1400. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2022.2847>

Rachael Bechtel
Twin sibling to Charles, forever age 11

Marianne Beel,
Parent to Danny, forever age 19

Steve and Joann Bogard
Parents to Mason, forever 15

Kristin Bride
Parent to Carson, forever age 16

Rose Bronstein
Parent to Nate, forever age 15

Heather Burgess
Parent to Tristen Walker Mackintosh, forever age 10

Kendall Butler
Parent to Justin, forever age 16

Dianne Campbell
Parent to Jamie Tuggle, forever age 12

Babette Canacari
Parent to Brianna, forever age 12

Angie Christophersen
Parent to Tristain, forever age 16

Laurie Dobson
Parent to Gage, forever age 14

William Dobson
Parent to Gage, forever age 14

Robert Gates
Parent to Jack Servi, forever age 16

Karrie Goodacre
Parent to Zach Peters, forever age 13

Kathryn Greenup
Parent to Eric, forever age 15

Patricia Jacobi
Grandmother to Curtis McAbee, forever age 11

Eleanor B. Jarman
Parent to Joshua, forever age 13

Joan Jensen
Parent to Mack, forever age 17

Robin Jones
Parent to Zachary Gist Jones, forever age 16

Steven Kafka
Parent to Vincent, forever age 20

Jennifer Kirkendall
Parent to Joshua, forever age 14

Karey Kleeman
Parent to Aiden Alvey, forever age 14

Frank Kotnik
Parent to Markus, forever age 15

Karen Landrum
Parent to Mathew Gabriel Vargas, forever age 13

Shannon Lee
Parent to Ashlyn, forever age 16

Christina Luna
Parent to Josiah Velasquez, forever age 15

Toni Martin
Parent to Uriah, forever age 12

Lynda McClain
Parent to Vincent Kafka, forever age 20

Christine McComas
Parent to Grace, forever age 15

Annie McGrath
Parent to Griffin ("Bubba"), forever age 13

Misty Medrano
Grandmother to Ethan, forever age 10

Maurine Molak
Parent to David, forever age 16

Amy Neville
Parent to Alexander, forever age 14

Bridgette Norring
Parent to Devin, forever age 19

Janeen Otis
Parent to Michael, forever age 21

Despina Prodromidis
Parent to Olivia Green, forever age 15

Kristie Reilly
Parent to Noah Dennis, forever age 13

Sage Roberts
Parent to Keston Roundy, forever age 13

Mary Rodee
Parent to Riley, forever age 15

Kelly Rodland
Parent to Kristopher, forever age 12

Judy Rogg
Parent to Erik Robinson, forever age 12

Deb Schmill
Parent to Becca, forever age 18

Michelle Servi
Parent to Jack, forever age 16

Joel Smith
Parent to Skyler, forever age 12

Misty Terrigino
Parent to Kaylie, forever age 17

Ken Tork
Parent to Kevin, forever age 15

Jeff Van Lith
Parent to Ethan, forever age 13

Jesus Verduzco
Parent to David J., forever age 18

Jennifer Walters
Parent to Luke, forever age 14

Mistie Wilson
Parent to Christopher, forever age 12

Sharon Winkler
Parent to Alex, forever age 17

Sondra and Shane Worthley
Parents to Xander, forever age 12

Dana Ziemniak
Parent to Evan, forever age 12