

Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA 2.0)

S. 1418, Introduced by Senators Ed Markey (MA) and Bill Cassidy (LA)

“The handful of powerful online platforms where kids and teens spend most of their online time are inherently harmful to them. Big Tech continues to blatantly prioritize raking in revenue over protecting children and teens, and that must stop.”

Senator Markey, co-author of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

Digital media and popular social media platforms are increasingly embedded in young people's lives. Research shows that children under the age of 8 consume digital media for almost two and a half hours a day, and over two-thirds of 5- to 8-year-olds have their own tablet or smartphone.

“In the case of teen girls and things like self harm, [engagement-based ranking] develops these feedback cycles where children are using Instagram to self-soothe, but then are exposed to more and more content that makes them hate themselves. This is a thing where we can't say 80% of kids are okay. We need to say how do we save all the kids?”

- Frances Haugen, Facebook Whistleblower

Big Tech companies are well aware that kids use their social media platforms in violation of their terms of service. But instead of removing young users from their platforms, tech companies track the online behavior of young users, collect their data, and use that data to precisely target advertisements and content toward minors in order to maximize the time that they spend online. The Children's Online Privacy Act (COPPA) is currently the only law protecting kids online, but it's long overdue for an update, given it was passed in 1998 before social media even existed. COPPA 2.0 would finally create the updated protections that young people need in the modern digital media environment. The bill would expand privacy protections to teenagers for the first time, and aims to impose data privacy rules for minors' sensitive data, which would significantly curtail Big Tech's ability to target minors with precision.

Key elements of COPPA 2.0 include:

- Expand protections to teenagers under the age of 17
- Ban targeted advertising to all minors under the age of 17
- Prevent Big Tech from purposefully overlooking the presence of underage users on their platforms by holding them accountable for users' companies should know are minors based on the circumstances
- Add additional categories of protected personal data, including biometric information and geolocation information
- Limit the scenarios in which online platforms can collect kids' and teens' personal information



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