



Advocates Tell the U.S. Senate to Pass the Kids Online Safety Act by End of Year

WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 9, 2023)- Yesterday, the Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, & Action (EDC) along with 220 organizations, participated in the Kids Online Safety Act Day of Action. Over 400 Advocates across the country sent messages to U.S. Senators urging them to co-sponsor the Kids Online Safety Act ([S.1409](#)) and urging U.S. Senate Majority Leader Schumer (D-NY) and U.S. Senate Minority Leader McConnell (R-KY) to bring the legislation up for a vote before the end of the year. The legislation has nearly 50 co-sponsors, broad bipartisan support, voted out of committee unanimously, and has the support of President Biden.

Youth continue to face a growing mental health crisis. While declines in youth mental health are attributable to numerous factors, the growing use of social media platforms designed in ways that increase exposure to harmful content and encourage unhealthy patterns of use have [contributed to these trends](#). Below are just some of the stark national findings:

- Instagram includes [90,000 unique pro-eating disorder accounts](#) with a reach of 20 million followers. Children as young as 9 and 10 follow three or more pro-eating disorder accounts. Meta derives an estimated \$230 million annually from pro-eating disorder accounts.
- Fifty-nine percent of U.S. teens report being [bullied on social media](#), an experience linked to increased risky behaviors such as smoking and increased risk of [suicidal ideation](#).
- Twenty-five percent of 9- to 17-year-olds report having had an [online sexually explicit interaction](#) with someone they believed to be an adult.

Earlier this week, Meta whistleblower, Arturo Béjar, [testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology and the Law](#) stating top executives at Meta not only know their platforms are harmful to children and teens but they also know what they could do to make their products safer and less addictive.

"After yet another Facebook whistleblower has come forward with more revelations of the refusal of Big Tech to take responsibility for the noxious effects of their business practices on children, no one should be surprised at how far unscrupulous and irresponsible platforms will go as long as they can get away with it," **said S. Bryn Austin, ScD, EDC Board Member.** "Now is the time for the Senate to act and bring the Kids Online Safety Act to the floor for a vote, and finally force social media companies to prioritize kids' health and well-being over corporate profit. We must send a clear message to Big Tech that the American people will hold them accountable to ensure the safety of their products and put kids' health and well-being first."

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a federal advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the U.S.

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