



U.S. Representatives Gus Bilirakis & Kathy Castor Introduce House Companion to the Kids Online Safety Act

WASHINGTON D.C. (April 11, 2024) – This week, U.S. Representatives Gus Bilirakis (R-FL-12) and Kathy Castor (D-FL-14) introduced the House companion to the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) ([H.R. 7891](#)), marking a significant step forward in advancing critical safeguards to protect children and young people online and hold big tech accountable. The Senate companion ([S.1409](#)) is led by Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Marsha Blackburn (R-TN). The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, & Action (EDC) is grateful for the bill sponsors and the original bill sponsors, Representatives Erin Houchin (R-IN-09), Kim Schrier (D-WA-08), and Larry Bucshon (R-IN-08) for taking the lead to stem the tide of the harmful mental health impacts of social media.

Since 2022, the EDC has led the efforts to establish a strong, bipartisan bill in both chambers. The dedication and commitment to a safer online environment from EDC leadership and the entire eating disorders community has helped to make this latest milestone toward KOSA becoming law.

"As we continue to work towards safeguarding our kids online, the introduction of the House companion bill of the Kids Online Safety Act is an important step in holding social media platforms accountable for their role in exposing children to detrimental content, which can contribute to worsening mental health and increased rates of suicide and eating disorders," **said Johanna Kandel, National Alliance for Eating Disorders CEO and EDC Board Member.** "As the founder and CEO of a national eating disorders organization, as well as a mother of a young child, these new laws would go a long way in protecting our children. I applaud Representatives Bilirakis & Castor, from my home state of Florida, for introducing this bill and helping to keep our kids safe."

"Teens are constantly connected through devices and their reality is a blend of virtual and real-world experiences, which are proven to exacerbate isolation and negative social interactions such as bullying," **said Representative Gus Bilirakis.** "We've seen far too many children succumb to tragedy after being exposed to harmful online content and behaviors. Through multiple Congressional hearings with whistleblower testimonies, it is clear that there is widespread, bipartisan consensus that Big Tech has failed to mitigate the risks, improve transparency, empower parents, and safeguard their youngest users. Our legislation will require them to do so."

“The online, digital world is not designed with children and teens in mind, and action is needed to counter the unscrupulous ways tech platforms addict children and steal their attention,” **said Representative Castor**. “That’s why I am proud to introduce the bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) with Reps. Bilirakis, Houchin, and Schrier to provide young people and parents with the tools, safeguards, and transparency needed to keep children and teenagers safe and hold Big Tech companies accountable. KOSA will help keep kids safe by outlawing manipulative design practices, amplification of harmful content, and damaging design features that can lead to mental anguish, eating disorders, physical violence, and suicide. It’s time the Congress steps up to keep our kids safe online.”

The EDC looks forward to working with both chambers to ensure the final legislative text is as strong as possible to protect children, young people, and families from the insidious impacts of online platforms, specifically mental health harms that contribute to disordered eating behaviors, eating disorders, and suicidal behaviors.

The Kids Online Safety Act will be featured at a hearing in the U.S. House of Representatives Energy & Commerce Committee on Wednesday, April 17 at 10 am ET.

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a Washington, D.C. based, federal advocacy organization comprised of advocacy organizations, academics, treatment providers, family/loved ones of children with eating disorders, and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States.

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