



August 4, 2026

Dear Chairman Cruz and Members of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee:

We thank you for your leadership in protecting children online.

As you are likely aware, this is an issue of grave importance and urgency, especially as it relates to kids' access to adult websites. Right now [54 percent of children](#) ages 13 and younger and [80 percent of children](#) ages 12-17 have been exposed to sexually explicit content. [On average](#), children are first exposed to pornography at just **12 years of age**. That's why Congress must act quickly to pass Senator Mike Lee's (R-UT) [SCREEN Act \(S. 737\)](#) and require pornography websites to implement age verification technology to prevent minors from accessing explicit content.

Voters are already on board, with [81 percent](#) supporting federal age verification for online porn. Since 2022, [27 states](#) have passed similar laws, most of them with bipartisan majorities. And last year, the Supreme Court ruled these protections were constitutional in *Free Speech Coalition v. Paxton*, recognizing the government's broad authority to protect children from sexual content. But the current patchwork of protection in the states will have limited effect without federal action; children in the other 23 states deserve protection, too.

[Seventeen states](#) recognize online pornography as a public health hazard, with a range of personal and social harms, [including](#):

- Unique risk for addiction among children and teenagers due to continued brain development
- Anxiety, low self-esteem, and body-image disorders
- Normalization of sexual violence
- Interruption of normal development of healthy relationships between boys and girls
- Problematic sexual activity at younger ages.

[More](#) and more [studies show](#) that not only does early exposure to pornography harm children's personal development, but it also leads to increasing cases of child-perpetrated sexual abuse. New technology only makes it easier than ever for young children to access pornography and endure these harms. [Nearly 25 percent of children](#) now own a smartphone by age 8, giving them immediate access to web browsers and opening the door to every platform available.

The United States is in crisis, and the SCREEN Act takes great strides in addressing it:

SCREEN applies directly to the source of digital pornography

Filters and blockers shield users from unwanted content, but only on individual devices. Age verification technology, by contrast, operates at the level of the websites hosting pornography. Mandating this technology places the responsibility where it belongs—on the pornography

companies that profit off of child addiction—and holds them accountable for the harms that ensue. The SCREEN Act reinforces this responsibility by empowering the Federal Trade Commission to investigate and take action against violators.

SCREEN provides a full suite of age verification options

Under the SCREEN Act, covered websites may choose the verification method that best fits their platform and business model, provided it satisfies the Act's standards. Nothing in the bill requires the use of a government ID for verification. Websites may contract with specialized third-party providers that already offer age verification services, allowing companies to take advantage of existing expertise, or even create their own programs internally. By setting clear legal requirements while allowing multiple paths for compliance, the SCREEN Act makes it easy for platforms to protect kids and comply with the law.

SCREEN protects data privacy

The SCREEN Act prohibits covered entities and third-party contractors from collecting any data deemed unnecessary for age verification. It further prohibits covered entities and contractors from retaining or selling the information collected for age verification purposes. This adds an important layer of privacy protection that does not currently exist.

SCREEN Complements the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) and the App Store Accountability Act (ASAA)

SCREEN Act helps address a blind spot in other kids' online safety bills: unfettered access to pornography for any kid who owns a smartphone. Although KOSA and ASAA take important steps to protect children on social media platforms and uphold parental rights in app stores, respectively, neither bill would stop minors from reaching adult websites. With increasing numbers of children accessing pornography at younger ages, additional legislation dealing with this specific issue is absolutely necessary.

The SCREEN Act hits the grand trifecta: it's good policy, it's narrowly tailored, and it's popular. It's ready to become law.

We the undersigned urge the Committee to prioritize the SCREEN Act and ensure its swift passage.

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