



Judiciary Committee
Nebraska Unicameral Legislature
Lincoln, NE 68509

February 15, 2024

Dear members of the Judiciary Committee,

Parents bear the ultimate responsibility for raising their children; but that does not mean they have to do so alone. From all walks of life and across the political spectrum, families are looking for more tools to help navigate the wide-ranging pitfalls facing kids and teens online. We firmly believe that helping parents keep their kids safe online should be a pro-family priority, and encourage you to put parents first as you consider legislation this session relating to kids and tech.

In a national poll commissioned by our two organizations, 86 percent of parents agreed that it is “too easy” for kids to access pornographic content online.¹ This is a bipartisan concern; Republican and Democratic parents alike recognize that allowing young people virtually unfettered access to pornographic content can make it more difficult for them to form healthy relationships and potentially lead to worse mental health. As Louisiana, Virginia, North Carolina, and other states have demonstrated, tools that require age verification to access sites that host pornographic content can be implemented in a way that respects user privacy.

The problems that tech presents to kids and parents are not limited to online porn; empowering parents requires a broader approach. Some states now require social media platforms to obtain parental permission before opening a new account for a minor, a measure that 81 percent of Democratic and 84 percent of Republican parents support. Our polling also found that 77 percent of all parents supported requiring social media platforms to give parents the ability to access what their kids are viewing, and who they are communicating with. This would lead to fewer children falling down rabbit holes of extreme or harmful content.

Our two organizations have experts who have thought through the legal questions, the technical challenges, and the political ramifications of these bills. Our team has worked with states across the U.S. on ways to implement tech policies that prioritize parents. We are more than happy to discuss our approach to smart, targeted legislation that would withstand legal challenges and provide meaningful answers to parents frustrated by the potential impact of tech and social media on their teens’ physical well-being and mental health. And we encourage you to prioritize families as you consider the legislative proposals in front of you.

Sincerely,

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¹ *Five Pro-Family Priorities for the 118th Congress and Beyond: Policies and Public Opinion on Putting Families First*, Institute for Family Studies and the Ethics and Public Policy Center, February 2023, <https://eppc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ifs-congress-familypriorities-final.pdf>