



Senate Democrats Introduce Legislation to Ban Certain App Features and Types of Advertising Aimed at Children Online

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The KIDS Act would prohibit online platforms directed to children under the age of 16 from using certain tools designed to increase the amount of time a user spends interacting with content. The bill specifically places restrictions on features such as auto-play settings that start another video automatically, push alerts that urge users to spend more time on the platform when they are not actively using it and badges or other visual symbols awarded based on levels of engagement with the platform.

Additionally, platforms directed to children under the age of 16 would be prohibited from using certain types of advertising, including host-selling, program-length advertisements, branded content and native advertising. The bill defines “host-selling” as commercial video content that features the same characters or individuals as in noncommercial content. It directs the Federal Trade Commission to define the term “program-length advertisement” through regulation or guidance—the term generally refers to commercial videos that are longer than a few minutes and similar in format to non-advertising content.

Platforms directed to children under the age of 16 would also be barred from using age verification information collected from users for any commercial purpose.

Further, the KIDS Act would prohibit operators of platforms directed to children under the age of 16 and platforms for which the operator has “constructive knowledge” that children under the age of 16 use the platform from encouraging children to engage with certain content. In particular, the bill would prohibit them from encouraging engagement with

content that involves sexual material, physical or emotional violence, “adult activities” and any other “dangerous, abusive, exploitative, or wholly commercial content.”

The bill would also require the Department of Commerce to establish a grant program to encourage the creation of advertisement-free educational online content for children under the age of 16. The KIDS Act has been endorsed by several consumer privacy groups, including Common Sense Media, the Center for Digital Democracy and Campaign for Commercial-Free Childhood.

The KIDS Act comes as lawmakers and consumer groups have increased their calls to advance measures protecting children online in recent months. Other bills currently pending before Congress, such as the [Kids PRIVCY Act](#) and the [PROTECT Kids Act](#), seek to strengthen protection for children online by amending the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

Categories

Children’s Privacy

Federal Privacy Policy

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