December 6th, 2023

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer:

As advocates for children’s health, online safety, privacy, mental health, parents, young people, and technology used for the common good, we are writing to express our deep disappointment over the news that the bipartisan S.1409, The Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) will not receive a vote by the full Senate before the end of the year. Given the overwhelming public and bipartisan support for the legislation – including support from 86% of Americans — calls for passage from President Biden and the United States Surgeon General, and its approval by the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee in July, this decision allows social media platforms to continue to place profits over kids’ safety. The evidence is clear that Big Tech has knowingly profited at the expense of our kids’ well-being. Already too many kids and families have experienced the dire consequences that result from social media companies’ greed. Accountability is far overdue.

We strongly and respectfully urge you to schedule a vote on KOSA for the first week Congress returns in January.

We were encouraged by your indications of support earlier this year for bringing KOSA and other kids and tech-related legislation to the floor for a vote in 2023. Parents, educators, medical experts, young people, and a broad swath of the public have been counting on it, and they have called for action to address the dangers posed by Big Tech’s platforms – because they’ve seen up close the harms to children and teens and the economic incentives that govern the platforms’ decisions. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide rates among 10 to 24 year-olds have doubled in the last 20 years, and more than 10,000 people die every year from eating disorders. Companies have derived millions of dollars per year by “optimizing” algorithms for engagement resulting in increased exposure among young girls to ‘pro-anorexia’ videos and other content that promotes eating disorders.

It’s no surprise that the Surgeon General has warned that social media platforms pose a “profound risk of harm” to youth.

All the while, social media companies know the extent to which their products are harming kids online – and in some cases are trying to make it harder to report abuse. Big Tech’s addictive algorithms are manipulative, generating and suggesting content based on previous behavior. The onus must be on the companies to make their products safe and not designed to fill kids’ feeds with posts that promote eating disorders, suicide, drug use, or sexual abuse. But it is Congress’
responsibility to force the platforms to enact and enforce the changes that these companies refuse to make, despite the evidence of their platforms’ harms.

That’s why KOSA is supported by over 200 national, state, and local organizations. KOSA passed out of committee unanimously because it will help repair a broken status quo and protect children and teens online from social media's worst harms.

While it's encouraging to see that the Senate Judiciary Committee will be hearing directly from tech CEOs at the end of January, another congressional reprimand will not make the internet safer and healthier for children and families; only congressional passage of KOSA and other online safety and tech-related legislation can do that.

We believe that you and many other members of the Senate are serious about wanting to protect kids and teens online, but the only way to make a difference in kids’ and parents’ lives now is to pass KOSA as soon as possible. We strongly and respectfully urge you to schedule a vote on KOSA for the first week Congress returns in January.

We thank you for your leadership in this critical area and we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

#HalfTheStory
Academy for Eating Disorders
Accanto Health
Accountable Tech
Active Minds
Ai Pono Hawaii
Alabama Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Alaska Eating Disorders Alliance
Alexander Neville Foundation
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association for the Child's Right to Play
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Counseling Association
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Group Psychotherapy Association American Psychological Association
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Arizona Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Association For Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents [ALAS]
BALANCE Eating Disorder Treatment Center
Banu Foundation
Be Real USA
Becca Schmill Foundation
Berkeley Media Studies Group
Body Activists
California, American Academy of Pediatrics – Chapter 1
California, American Academy of Pediatrics – Chapter 2
California, American Academy of Pediatrics – Chapter 3
Carly Ryan Foundation
Carolina Resource Center for Eating Disorder Center for Change
Center for Digital Democracy
Center for Discovery Eating Disorders Treatment
Center for Humane Technology
Center for Intuitive Eating Center for Online Safety
Chasing Hope Foundation
ChildFund International
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development
Citizens for Decency
Clementine Programs
Clinical Social Work Association
Colorado Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Common Sense Media
Consumer Action
Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology
D.C. Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics Defending the Early Years
David’s Legacy Foundation
Delaware Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Design It For Us
Devin J. Norring Foundation
Discovery Mood & Anxiety Program
Disordered Eating Center of Charleston- Charleston, West Virginia
Early Childhood Work Group, Screen Time Action Network at Fairplay
Eating Disorder Coalition of Iowa
Eating Disorder Foundation Eating Disorder Resource Center
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, & Action Eating Disorders New Hampshire
Eating Disorders Resource Center of Silicon Valley
Eating Recovery Center
EDGE Consulting Partners
EDRCSV
Educate and Empower Kids
Emily Program
Enough Is Enough
Equip Health
Erik's Cause
Fairplay
Farrington Specialty Centers
Florida Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
For You
From Love
Galen Hope
Georgia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Global Hope 365
Idaho Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
IFEDD, The International Federation of Eating Disorder Dietitians
Illinois Certified Recovery Support Specialist
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Indiana Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Inner Explorer
Inner Haven
Inseparable
International Society for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses
Iowa Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Issue One
Josselyn
Jewish Family and Children’s Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties
Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Kentucky Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Kentucky Eating Disorder Council
Kentucky Voices for Health
Lines for Life
LiveMore ScreenLess
Lookup.live
Louisiana Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Lynn's Warriors
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Massachusetts Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Massachusetts PTA
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
McCallum Place Eating Disorder Center
Media Education Foundation
Mental Health America
Mental Health America of Arizona
Mental Health America of Augusta
Mental Health America of Greater Dallas
Mental Health America of Greater Houston
Mental Health America of Hawaii
Mental Health America of Hendricks County
Mental Health America of Illinois
Mental Health America of Kentucky
Mental Health America of West Central Indiana, Inc.
Mental Health Association of Monmouth County
Mental Health Association of South Mississippi
Mental Health Minnesota
Mental Health Summit
Mental Health Work Group, Screen Time Action Network at Fairplay
Michigan Eating Disorders Alliance
Mississippi Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Missouri Eating Disorders Association
Missouri Eating Disorders Council
Monte Nido and Affiliates
Multi-Service Eating Disorders Association, Inc (MEDA)
NAMI Barrington Area
NAMI CCNS
NAMI Lexington
NAMI South Suburbs
NAMI Will-Grundy
National Alliance for Eating Disorders
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders
National Center on Sexual Exploitation
National Eating Disorders Association
National Education Association
National Federation of Families
National League for Nursing
Nebraska Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Nevada Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
New York State, American Academy of Pediatrics – Chapter 2
New York State, American Academy of Pediatrics – Chapter 3
North Dakota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
North Carolina Pediatric Society
NoSo November
Odyssey Eating Disorder Network
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Oklahoma Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Oliver-Pyatt Centers
Online Harms Prevention Work Group, Screen Time Action Network at Fairplay
Opal: Food+Body Wisdom
Orange County Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
PACT
Parents Television and Media Council
Parents Who Fight
ParentsTogether Action
Paving the Way Foundation
Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Policy Initiatives Institute
Porn Free Colorado
Postpartum Support International
Project HEAL
Project Liberty Action Network
Project STAND
Prosperity Eating Disorders and Wellness
Protect Young Eyes
Public Citizen
Realized Potential Inc
REDC Consortium
Renfrew Center
Rescue Innocence Movement
RI International
Rosewood Center for Eating Disorders
Rudd Center for Food Policy & Health
Sandy Hook Promise
Screens in Schools Work Group, Screen Time Action Network at Fairplay
SEA WAVES, Inc
Society for Digital Mental Health
Society for Research in Psychopathology
Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, Division 53
South Carolina Legislative Roundtable
Stop Predatory Gambling and the Campaign for Gambling-Free Kids
Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders
Student Data Privacy Project
SunCloud Health
The Real Facebook Oversight Board
The Tech Oversight Project
Tennessee Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
The Kennedy Forum
The Jed Foundation Therapy for Black Kids
Together with Love
Twig & Thread Consulting
Utah Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Veritas Collaborative
Vermont Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Victus Counseling & Nutrition Services
Vote For Freedom
Walden Eating Disorders Treatment
Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America
Washington Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Washington Nature Preschool Association (WaNPA)
Washington University School of Medicine Center for Healthy Weight and Wellness
Wealth Management Ministries-Prevention Works Joint Task Force and Coalition
West Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Western New York Comprehensive Care Center for Eating Disorders
Will County Health Department
Wired Human
WithAll
Within Health
Wyoming Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
YCA Human Trafficking Task Force